

Is Ignorance Really Bliss?

*Written by April Mihalovich, Tabor Academy Associate Editor
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Whether your family has gone to private school for years, or you're the first generation to go to private school, somewhere along the way someone has mentioned how fortunate you are for having such an opportunity. Of course, they're right. About 5.5 million, or only 10% of all American students are enrolled in private school. To go to private school gives students distinct advantages over those who don't. The mission of a private school, after all, is to prepare students for attending rigorous colleges or universities after graduation. Often, private school students are too late in realizing all of the opportunities offered to them at their schools, reflecting on their time at prep school as years that that could have been spent more efficiently. Why would someone purposely not take advantage of all these opportunities? From locations to athletics, arts, and academics, each private school offers a myriad of unique programs and encourages students to make the most of their time on campus. However, so many private school graduates tell the same story: wishing they had done this or that while they still had the time.

As a freshman at Tabor, I came from a town where no one really went to boarding school and from a school that didn't have much money or resources. The waterfront, turf fields, and ceramics studio at Tabor came as a shock to me: how could you not want to try everything?! But as the year went on, I found myself slipping into the familiar pattern of private school students: classes, required after school activities, homework, then bed. I barely had enough time to hang out with friends, let alone stay on campus for clubs or weekend activities. Without a doubt, I can say that every Tabor, or even private school, student has struggled with managing their time at school. Whether it's academics, social life, or extracurricular activities, students often find parts of their lives falling through the cracks during the school year. Even though maintaining a full schedule and still finding time to make a difference on campus is increasingly difficult, refusal to seek change and balance in your schedule in order to seek out more time for engaging in student life shows how under-appreciated private school really is.

Crowd mentality and the social atmosphere also have big impacts on private school students. Students will be encouraged to participate in clubs and seek out leadership positions if they see others before them do the same. If the campus atmosphere discourages students from joining clubs or excelling in their field for fear of ridicule, then students will graduate wishing they had overcome these fears instead of just taking the back seat. Because high school is a time where no one wants to stick out or be different from the rest, students are less likely to want to make a difference or stand out on campus, or even just to do some of the amazing things they set to do that first day of freshman year.

Students who have chosen to make a place for themselves on campus and have truly made their school their home will find themselves thankful for the person they've become at the end of their

high school years, and will realize the many ways in which the school has changed them for the better. However, a student who has remained ignorant to the opportunities offered to them at private school would find themselves lacking any memories specific to their school. In other words, their four year experiences could be replaced with one at any other school. Not only is limiting yourself from the opportunities at your school betraying yourself and your education, but it's also not fair to those around you who appreciate each and every day they spend at private school. In the end, it's not always about what what you can gain from your time at private school, but it's about what you can leave behind: your impact on the people around you.

It can be argued that every student at one point throughout their high school career feels pressure from others to talk, act, or think some way. What differentiates a good student from a great student is his ability to maintain his individuality and do what he wants rather than what others tells him to do. While a student who does the bare minimum to get by in private school may be successful, they won't necessarily be happy. People who choose to not to make the best life for themselves during their time at a prep school are betraying themselves. By not doing the most with the things they've been given, students are not allowing themselves to grow and be influenced by the campus atmosphere. Students who carry this ignorant and too-cautious mentality throughout high school are only depriving themselves of lifelong connections, future successes, and memories from a school they've been lucky to attend in the first place.