

Bring it on, Balance!

*Written by Olivia Morrison and Elyse Kassa, NMH School Panel Members
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After an exhausting day filled with classes, sports, and co-curriculars that sometimes extends into study hall, we run back to our dorms, escaping the labyrinth of derivatives and the pressure of memorizing hundreds of terms for an AP Psychology quiz. Some leave the romantic realms of NMH's Schauffler Library and kiss their boyfriends goodbye, while others thank the librarian for giving them a crash course on footnotes.

It's 9:58PM, and only two minutes remain of study hall. Within seconds, the dorms bustle with activity. Crossley's center lounge is flooded with people in line trying to buy food from the dorm store. We check our phones to like our friends' Instagram posts and watch their Snapchat stories for anything new. Realizing how much time we just spent in the lounge socializing, we run back to our rooms before hurrying to wait in line for a shower at 10:24PM.

Lights out comes at midnight for us. We were all irritated when the school announced its new policy for this year, pulling in-rooms thirty minutes earlier than normal to 10:30PM, but reassured ourselves that this change is "for our own health" and could generate time for us to finally close our eyes and reflect upon ourselves. But do we really have time for that?

Olivia Morrison, a junior and an active member of the NMH Arts, reflects on her week.

Even though my mind is stamped with test grades and class averages, as I replay events over in my mind of the closing school week, I sigh with relief: thank god the weekend is upon us. And even though my brain drowns with ideas for my APUSH Revolution paper due on Monday while Hamilton showtunes echo the rhythm of my heartbeat, tomorrow I can finally sleep past 7AM. Friday has freed my worries, and the pleasure of procrastination begins. With the echo of Ashlyn's music penetrating the room's silence and the lamp's light illuminating my shadow, slumber seems impossible. I switch off the desk lamp: the white, bright light stimulates me more than Snapchat does. But as the switch clicks, I am immediately transformed into a vacuum of darkness. I spray my lavender air mist, a reminder to me of home and summer, and I close my eyes. But as I begin to think about the amount of work I have this weekend, I start to panic. Breathe. I readjust myself into sleep mode. Yet still, the whispers of test dates and in-class essays haunt my thoughts. The faculty say stress fosters positivity. I can't say I agree. It's midnight. Saturday has already arrived, and I'm already wasting time. My toe taps to the beat of my new tune, the song of stress.

Elyse Kassa, a junior with a passion for dance, takes a moment to breathe.

With the lights off and my contacts disposed of, I can only make out the faint outlines of objects near me. Naomi is beginning to snore on the other side of the room. I see her chest rising and falling under the comfort of her covers. We barely had time to talk about the events of our respective Friday nights before she decided she needed to rest. I check the time at 11:30PM. Light from my phone shines on my to-do list, the one I have hanging next to my bed. Remember to complete my summer program applications before they're due. I didn't have the time to edit the stories I wrote last weekend, so I guess that'll have to be accomplished tomorrow. 7:30PM? After dinner? Sounds like a date. Maybe I'll be able to go to sleep earlier tomorrow. I set my alarm for tomorrow, 9:00AM, in order to ensure time for two cups of coffee before dance at 10:30AM.

That's how it goes at a place like NMH. We, as students, are so phenomenally preoccupied with the fates of our future that the last thing we do before bed is think about the events of tomorrow. In many ways, this is exactly what I am supposed to be doing: I'm at a college preparatory school after all. But time for self-reflection and self-evaluation is necessary to live my life. These valuable moments allow me to center myself. My alone time is what keeps me sane. I am challenged with finding those times in my daily routines and jam-packed life.

Elyse Kassa and Olivia Morrison's marriage will be taking place in October, 2019.