



Our Ongoing Pursuit of Balance

Spartan Families,

Thank you to all the family members who attended our evening with Dr. Luthar of Arizona State University on September 19th ([see presentation linked here](#)). She was a delightful guest who validated the hard work of parenting and teaching as well as provided us with some very serious data around our students' health and well-being. While our students' rates of drug and alcohol use are at national norms, our students are experiencing anxiety and depression at significantly higher rates than national norms. Clearly, it is still very important that we staff continue to pursue **our building goal of promoting the development of balanced learners and a mindfulness of personal well-being**. As a school, we are striving to promote an awareness of our students' personal well-being and advocate for healthy lifestyle choices as a way to bring balance to students' academic and personal lives.

It is also important that we note and celebrate the good work parents are doing to develop and maintain positive relationships with our teens. This trust and communication are protective factors our students enjoy and we reap the benefits of daily. We were also so glad to see and read in the data with Dr. Luthar that our students feel they get a balanced message about achievement from their school. A surprise for us, though, was the degree of the impact social media and peer to peer comparisons are having for our students. This year part of our work will include learning more about these comparisons and how to manage them, and even teach coping strategies for them, in a world that is not likely to become less dependent on technology any time soon.

It was also not lost on us how much Dr. Luthar emphasized taking care of the care-takers; in fact, she studied it and has proven its positive impact on caregivers. For almost a year now I have been sending articles, links, videos and messages to staff to encourage them to take care of themselves. Many of them have responded and begun a conversation with me about how they manage self-care and their goals around self-care. I hope sincerely that you will also take to heart the importance of taking care of you. I want to be healthy and well for my own kids now and for many years to come and we do this best when we are tending to our own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs well.

Thank you for being in this work with us. None of us is a perfect parent or a perfect teacher and yet we continue to believe that imperfect people can create beauty and growth especially when we work together.

Donna Hood, Principal

Other Resources to Continue the Conversation:

Frank Bruni's piece on college "The Elite Squeeze"—which by the way, the amazing Elizabeth Lund had already linked to our IB site <http://www.yilianlx.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/1.pdf> as well as <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/18/living/feat-college-admissions-frank-bruni-new-book/> and <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/opinion/sunday/frank-bruni-how-to-survive-the-college-admissions-madness.html>

Hannah Rosin's article on Palo Alto <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/12/the->

[silicon-valley-suicides/413140/](#)

Dr. Luthar's article "I Can, Therefore I Must" <http://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/affluence.aspx>

One last piece about how to support students' emotional well-being

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/04/well/family/teaching-your-child-emotional-agility.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=mini-moth%C2%AEion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below>

What's happening outside of school?

Check out Skyline's Community Fliers [electronic bulletin board](#).