

Should Schools Have Longer Breaks?

BY ERIKKA LANGEMO

SCHOOL BREAKS HAVE BEEN a well-talked-about topic since I was younger. I remember having a class debate about it in 5th grade and then also talking about it later in my freshman year of high school. In 5th grade, the thought of getting longer breaks sounded absolutely amazing, so of course, we all always said we wanted that. However, as we grew up, the idea of a greater number of shorter breaks became a truly possible contender. Some schools handle breaks differently, whether it be there are more breaks that are shorter or fewer breaks that are longer. People debate about which one is more effective for students' performance. I have heard really good points on both sides of

the argument. Some people are perfectly fine with how breaks are now. Personally, I think that schools shouldn't have longer breaks, but instead should have more frequent breaks throughout the year. If we took longer breaks, it would give students more time to catch up in classes, get some well-needed sleep, and spend time with friends and family. If we took longer breaks throughout the year, I think students' schedules would be thrown off a bit. If we spent longer time away from school, we could get thrown off the rhythm that we adapt to for school. Also, classes will have giant gaps if we increase our break lengths. For example, Thanksgiving break is right near the end of our first semester, and if we

increased the length of the break, it would throw students off their school rhythm right before finals. To me, it just makes more sense to have shorter breaks throughout the year instead of increasing the length of our breaks. It is good to have a rhythm, especially in college. There are so many different things students have to balance throughout their lives. I think lengthening the break time could also throw off students that work on campus because there might be job shifts they could have worked that they now can't work since it is vacation. There are many reasons why we should not have longer breaks, but instead, have a larger amount of short breaks.

It's Time We Talk About Eating: Why Eating Disorders and Disordered Eating Needs to be Part of Children's Education.

BY MAKI JENNER

SCROLL THROUGH MY Instagram feed a few times a day only to see girls with clear skin, healthy hair, and thin bodies. I don't pay much attention to it, but then heading downstairs to my kitchen I ponder whether I really should be eating right now. Approximately 28.8 million Americans will have an eating disorder within their lifetime. I don't remember ever learning about eating disorders or disordered eating in my schooling, and I think that it's time that changes.

We often hear of stigmas surrounding mental health, but in the last few years, it has been a more open conversation for many people. So why can't it be the same with eating disorders? First, we need to talk about what an eating disorder (ED) is, and then how there is a difference between an ED and disordered eating. It is a common misconception, and sports nutritionist Kaela Colvard at the Training Haus goes in-depth on the difference when speaking with her.

"Eating disorders differentiate from disordered eating in such that an eating disorder is a brain-based disorder whereas disordered eating is more of infatuations/obsessions of unhealthy diets or meal routines or food beliefs that are thought to be improving your health and weight loss," Colvard said.

For most people, we don't even realize we have an unhealthy relationship with food until it is too late. As an athlete, I am constantly taught to fuel my body properly. Yet, I get pregame jitters, causing my stomach to ache. By the time the game is over, I don't want to eat! So how do we balance a healthy lifestyle, body image, and physical health? Through education.

According to Beat Eating Disorder's website, it can take up to three years for someone dealing with an eating disorder to reach out for help. This is because it can be so difficult to analyze symptoms; we don't

talk or learn about the many different forms of eating disorders, so how are we supposed to know?

"I personally did not know mine was an eating disorder," Emma Hanson, a junior at Concordia University St. Paul said.

"Everyone's eating disorders are different and severe in their own ways, but my anorexia had progressed pretty severely. As an adult, you must admit yourself to a treatment program so I figured if people in my life wanted me to get help it probably wouldn't be a bad idea."

In a study done by Sam Houston State University, out of 169 students assessed, not one of them was involved in any sort of educational program about eating disorders in high school. How can something so common in America's youth be so kept in the dark? No one wants to admit they have a problem despite the fact everyone struggles with something. We are constantly surrounded by this idea of the "perfect human" online only to look in a mirror and see we look nothing like them.

Not only that, but some disordered eating can be so hidden we feel like we are living a healthy lifestyle- but we are hurting ourselves. For example, I wake up at five o'clock in the morning for practice and don't eat before. I come home and jet to class at nine, have an hour between classes to nap, then off again to lift for an hour. I get home want to shower and go to bed- but wait, I haven't even had a real meal all day. Yet for some reason that seems okay to me. Despite burning over 2,000 calories I have only put about 500 into my body. But I'm exercising so I must be healthy, right? That is the attitude a lot of people have, but our bodies will eventually shut down if this cycle continues.

So, what do we do? How do we promote healthy

food and body relationships? Like most things, it starts at the grassroots. We need to start implementing ED education in middle schools and high schools across the U.S. We need to start the conversation that it's okay to struggle, but it's even more important to seek help when struggling. There are so many programs out there trying to promote eating disorder prevention and awareness that we don't even know about. Many of which offer in-school programs such as FREED, a non-profit organization that has visited over 5,500 middle school and high school students.

"I absolutely think there needs to be more education within both schools and athletic departments," Hanson said.

"I think it would be a great idea to teach nutrition classes in primary and secondary schools as well as athletic teams. All it takes is for proactive education and research, making schools and sports a safe environment for people to openly communicate things going on with their relationship with eating and their bodies."

When Emma first opened up about her eating disorder, she wrote a story for national eating disorder awareness week through The Hidden Opponent, and the outreach she got after that was incredible. People that had connected to Emma's story and had no idea that what they thought was healthy was destructive. I have seen the stigma of mental health start to deteriorate over the past few years, and it is certainly time for eating disorder prevention and care to join that pattern. I know that I am stronger than my relationship with food, but we need to make sure our younger generations know they are too.