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## Letter to the Editor

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The Opinion Pages | LETTER

## The Pressures on Today's Students

MAY 1, 2015

### **To the Editor:**

The juxtaposition of two articles in the April 26 Sunday Review, “College for the Masses” and “Push, Don’t Crush, the Students,” was remarkable for the contrasting assumptions embedded in each.

In Palo Alto, Calif., there is seemingly no room for anything short of 100 percent success; these children come from families that are well educated and well off.

By contrast, Carlos Escanilla, who scored poorly on the SAT and was a mediocre student in high school, didn’t expect very much of himself. Yet he completed college and graduate school. Mr. Escanilla’s story is an inspirational one of resilience, determination and grit.

We must not assume that some students are destined for glory while others are destined to fail. Students who don’t excel academically during K-12 education may eventually cultivate a love for learning. Other students who typically succeed benefit from experiencing a low grade or other “failure.” Having lived in graduate student housing while my single-parent mom completed her Ph.D., I appreciate the important impact these assumptions can have.

We must recognize and better cultivate resilience and grit by talking about our own failures — when we didn’t get the “A” grade, or the internship or the job. How did we, like Mr. Escanilla, fall, dust ourselves off and keep going?

We must take the time to model handling failure, challenging ourselves and finding balance.

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*The writer is a graduate of Palo Alto High School and Stanford University and the dean at Golden Gate University School of Law.*