



# Middle Schools That **STRESS**

# VS.

# Middle Schools That **STRETCH**



Curriculum and lessons are designed for **extrinsic motivation**; the primary motivator is for students to earn a grade or privilege and/or avoid punishment.

Curriculum and lessons are designed for the **intrinsic motivation**; the primary motivator is to engage students, set goals, and develop lifelong skills.

Learning is passive. Students mostly **receive and internalize information** from a teacher or other resource.

Learning is active. Students are **agents of their own learning.**



**Homework is overwhelming**; middle school teachers determine assignments in isolation and the length of assignments is often unpredictable.

**Homework is reasonable**; middle school teachers coordinate assignments to avoid overloading students.

**Assessment is narrowly defined**; student progress is mostly measured in test scores and graded worksheets or assignments.

**Assessment is comprehensive**; students demonstrate understanding through project-based assignments, class discussions, and occasional tests. Teachers get to know each student and individually track his or her progress according to their personal development and goals. Teachers may also use a rubric, so students have a clear understanding of how they are assessed.

School culture values **achievement** of students above all else.

School culture values **character** of students as much as **achievement.**

Recess is rare or non-existent; **every moment of the school day is structured and students** have little to no free time.

**Unstructured time is built into the school** day for recess, socialization, working one-on-one with teachers, or just downtime between classes to reboot.



Students feel the pressure to **“NOT make a mistake!”**

Students feel secure to **“LEARN from your mistakes!”**