

My grades don't know anything. My test scores cannot laugh at my jokes, or listen to me practice guitar. My report cards won't go to the beach with my friends and me, and the ACT definitely won't sing along to my favorite bands while I'm driving. My grades and scores can only show how well I retain information, and how well I use it. They cannot tell someone that I love animals and that even though half of my school thinks I hate the snow, I secretly love making giant snowmen. My grades won't tell a college how great of a friend I am, or how hard I've work to achieve my goals. My ACT score's won't fill anybody in on how quickly I can solve a Rubik's cube, or my concern for the lack of animal rights in America. They can tell you that I study instead of party, and that in 10 grade I had trouble with French class. But as for the real me, my grades won't show anyone what they need to know.

I'm aware that It's easy to judge people based on how well they do in school, or whether or not they got a high score on the ACT/SAT's; but what it really comes down to in the end is what kind of person you are. No one gets married based on their SAT scores. Near the end of someone's life, no one says: "My life was complete because I got straight A's and a perfect score on the SAT's." They recall memories and friendships; family vacations and how they got the scar on their leg from playing kickball in third grade.

Going through-out high school and applying to college, its easy to start defining yourself with numbers, grades, even the schools you apply too, but what it's important to remember is you're not what your grades are, but rather who you are as a person. Looking at the facts, high school is an awkward time for everyone, but the great thing about such a small boarding school is we're all in a community that will accept you and help you grow. No matter what, you can leave Purnell knowing how to do our laundry on our own. How to handle being sick without our parents here, and how to manage your time between school, homework, Gossip Girl, friends, Lost and 30 Rock.

Applying to college is one of the most tedious things I've ever had to do. Thank God for the Common Application and the Internet otherwise I would still be applying to college now. Except, it wasn't filling out the application that was the hard part of the process. It was concept choosing what schools would be right for me. Everyone seemed to have an opinion, everyone seemed to know the "perfect school for me". I analyzed facts and figures, did research on every college that people had suggested and what did I realize? That no one but me could choose the right place for me. I could read books about every college I wanted to apply to, people could throw out average SAT scores and GPA's to try and impress me but in the end, I don't want to be another person in a percentile. I want to go to an actual community that recognizes my spirit and my love for everything fun, and embraces that. A community built on trust that helps me grow and encourages me to do everything I can, not one breaking my spirit. I want a college to look at what I bring to the table, if every guest at a pot luck dinner brings the same thing we'd all be having Jell-o molds for the entire night. I want to leave Purnell and go to a college and have teachers who will know me by my name, rather than just another paper they have to grade.

This is not me attempting to give you all some sort of ephiany in the past three to five minutes. This is no way shape or form me denying the importance of trying your best and doing well in school, but rather a challenge to all of you. Don't let yourself fall into the habit of defining yourself with grades and numbers; don't change yourself to look better on paper to make sure you fit into a college's percentile; but rather be yourself and remember, your grades don't know anything.