

There's a Downside to Attending an Academically Selective School, Study Says

October 31, 2018

When sending their children to school, parents will often aim for schools with high scores and challenging programs, but according to a [new analysis](#) of data from [Project TALENT](#), selective schools with a higher average achievement level may actually exert a negative influence on students' long-term success.

The nationally representative, longitudinal study of over 377,000 high school students found that while students who attend socioeconomically advantaged high schools tend to complete more schooling, earn higher annual incomes, and work in more prestigious jobs 11 and 50 years later, those who attend selective, high-achieving schools tend to experience the opposite.

The report, published by the Association for Psychological Science, claims that students in high-achievement schools had relatively lower expectations due to social comparison. In other words, these students, many of whom might've been near the top of their class in a more academically diverse school, develop a less positive self-image when all of their classmates are high-achieving. These expectations then negatively impacted students' attainment levels in the future.