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Justice
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Second Chances and Assistance

This case study gives the choice: either promote Ada and risk her falling behind again and making it worse, or hold her back and risk Ada giving up altogether and becoming “just another statistic.” A third alternative presented in the case study, sending Ada to an Alternative School, is worse than both these options. I believe that Ada should be promoted and her teachers should offer her external help over the summer.

Promoting Ada can be justified by a plethora of reasons. Ada has shown promise, and has improved greatly already. She had been trying her best all year. If Ada is not promoted there is a risk that she could drop out next year – she will be turning 16 and will not want to stay with the kids that will be coming into the 8th grade. According to dosomething.org, about 1.2 million students drop out of high school – that’s about 1 every 24 seconds and 7,000 a day. Ada could easily become a part of this horrible statistic.

The alternative to promoting or retaining Ada is to send her to an Alternative School. According to the teachers, that school is very dangerous. “They’re lucky if they keep the stabbings under control. Even if she survives she won’t learn anything

there,” one says. The Alternative School is also the first stop on the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ and would decrease her chances of success.

Ada has been having a hard time coping with the death of her brother and now hopping from foster home to foster home. I know from personal experience that when a loved one dies your academics suffer greatly. In 6th grade I missed about 2-3 week of school when a close relative passed away, and again in 8th grade I missed a straight month of school when another close relative died. When this happened and I came back, my teachers helped me, gave me opportunities to catch up and made sure I did not fail - I was supported the whole way. Ada deserves extra chances too.

The positive outcome of her promotion is that Ada will become inspired by being moved up. She will take the initiative and try harder over the summer, and in high school she will likely learn more and catch up to where she needs to be. If she is given the second chance and given positive support by the people in her life, it may motivate her to keep working hard. Having a strong support system in your personal life has a positive effect on your life outcome.

Ada should get help from her teachers over the summer if she is promoted, even if this is on their own time. The teachers seem to really care for Ada. They discussed changing her grades to passing, they have offered her help in the past, and they are torn about what to do with her. There is no external help as Ada is

being passed between foster homes as she has watched her brother die and has no family left. Ada has already shown that she can make progress with help; her teachers helped get the ball rolling and if they keep pushing they can get it rolling faster and faster. Sometimes doing what is right means sacrificing one's own interest - the teachers should make the sacrifice of time over the summer to do what is right for Ada.

Now one might argue, why should teachers "bend the rules" for Ada when they haven't for other students whose situations are less well known? Although the teachers did not know the full situation for other students, they do know Ada's whole situation. Not knowing your students well enough is the problem, and that's not something Ada should be punished for. That's on the teachers. Teachers should treat their students as people and not just another thing to teach. They should show Ada a sense of humanism and focus more on her and not base their final decision on what they have done with previous students. The individual is more important than the system.

Ada's teachers should promote her and offer her help over the summer. Her teachers should make their decision with a sense of humanism and realize who she is: a human being in a bad spot who needs help, not just a transcript of grades and credits. What my teachers did for me is what they should do for Ada: support the student through a tough time and help them pass the grade.