

# Scenarios

## of Three Students: Renee, Samantha, and DeSean

### Renee's Story: Elementary School Student

#### *In the Classroom*

- Renee is a third grade student who was tested at the end of last year, identified as gifted, and placed in the only grade 3 gifted classroom.
- Renee is constantly loud and disruptive, demanding the teacher's attention and often speaking out of turn. When she is not acknowledged immediately, she will get angry and yell, often using inappropriate language.
- Other students' parents have complained to the teacher because their children come home with stories of classroom disruption and being bothered by Renee.
- Today, when the teacher told Renee she would not be able to go to recess because of her behavior, she spit at the teacher. She was sent to the principal's office because of this incident.

#### *Teacher's View*

- The teacher has been in the assistant principal's office in tears on three separate occasions because, she says, she "cannot deal with this child."
- The teacher has asked that Renee be removed from her class.

#### *Family Interactions*

- On two previous occasions when the principal has conferenced with Renee's parents, the parents expressed their belief that the teacher treats Renee differently and that other students get away with behaviors that Renee is being punished for.
  - The principal is treading lightly because he knows that Renee's father was laid off from his job six months ago and that the family is under a lot of financial stress.
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### Samantha's Story: Middle School Student

#### *In the Classroom*

- Samantha is struggling academically and reads at a third grade level.
- Samantha's English and math teachers report that she cannot keep her hands to herself and is constantly out of her seat, disrupting the classroom.
- Samantha loves art and chorus and has had no problems in those courses or with her other elective teachers. However, she almost never participates in P.E., rarely even changing into her gym clothes, and she is failing this class.

- Today in English class Samantha pushed another student, who fell and scraped her knee, badly enough to make her cry and have to be sent to the nurse. Samantha was sent to the principal's office because of this incident.

### **Background**

- Samantha is an overweight sixth grade student who has a history of missing a lot of school. (Last year she missed 19 days—more than 10% of the school year.)
- Samantha does not have any close friends and is often seen alone at school.

### **Family Interactions**

- Samantha lives with her mother and her mother's boyfriend. The mother's boyfriend is often the one to drop her off at school when she has missed the bus.
  - Samantha's mother works nights and sleeps during most days, so the school has had difficulty contacting her to discuss Samantha.
  - When the school has been able to speak with Samantha's mother, she seems exasperated, saying that it is the "teacher's job to teach her." She indicates that she has no problems with Samantha at home and the teacher must not know how to work with her.
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## **DeSean's Story: High School Scenario**

### **In the Classroom**

- DeSean was happy at the beginning of the school year and liked all his teachers
- Unfortunately, due to class overcrowding and contract-mandated class sizes, the counselor was forced to move DeSean to a different algebra class at the end of the first week. This meant that DeSean had to leave a teacher he liked as well as a number of friends in that class. The schedule change also meant that DeSean's lunch period moved from fourth hour to fifth, causing him to have a different lunch period from his close friends.
- DeSean began to cut algebra to have lunch with his friends. He also began coming late to algebra class, displaying anger when present, and being confrontational with the teacher.
- DeSean is currently failing algebra, and he earned a "D" in English at mid-term. However, he seems to be "holding his own" in most of his other classes.

### **Discipline**

- DeSean is a 16-year-old ninth grade student who is being suspended for 5 days for repeated violations of school rules. Most serious is a recent confrontation with his fourth period algebra teacher. DeSean was involved in a verbal argument in class and dropped the "F bomb" on his teacher.

- The assistant principal has seen DeSean seven times in the first four weeks of school for various infractions, including cutting class, leaving campus without permission, excessive tardiness, insubordination, defiance of authority, and this final confrontation. He has been given warnings, multiple in-school suspensions, and after-school detention.

### ***Background***

- DeSean has struggled academically since middle school. He was retained in sixth grade and is currently two to three years behind grade level in reading and two years behind in math.
- DeSean lives with his mom and stepdad. His biological parents divorced when DeSean was entering third grade, and he and his mom went to live with his grandparents.
- DeSean's mom married his stepdad when he entered sixth grade. The school counselor met with DeSean and his mom that year to address DeSean's academic and behavioral problems. It was determined that he was "having difficulty" adjusting to all the changes in his life, particularly having a new person vying for his mom's attention. After this initial meeting, there was no follow-up.

### ***Family Interactions***

- DeSean's parents have been contacted by phone but have been unable to leave work to attend conferences.
  - They have expressed dissatisfaction with the school for the way their son has been treated; in their view, DeSean's teachers pick on him and are too quick to blame him for minor offenses.
  - A letter has been sent home informing his parents of his suspension.
  - DeSean's mom works full-time at minimum wage, and his stepdad details cars at a local auto dealership.
  - Due to financial problems, the family moved back in with DeSean's grandparents at the start of the school year.
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