

Student Scenarios Activity

Student A

Student A is a grade 7 student at Wilson Middle School. This year the school counselor came to her homeroom to talk about preparing for college and careers and asked the students to complete a college and career survey that included questions about interests and talents.

Student A lives with relatives and has limited interaction with her parents. She is the oldest of three children and often takes care of her siblings, who are in elementary school. She enjoys occasionally reading at home when it is quiet, but it rarely is. Student A likes to play teacher at home with her siblings and other children in her neighborhood. She views this playtime as good practice for the future and a way to escape some of life. She does the majority of the housework so that her relatives will not see her as a burden and send her and her siblings to live somewhere else. In the summer Student A will be working with young children as a teacher's helper at her church's day camp, which will enable her and her siblings to attend for free. In filling out the college and career survey, Student A noted that her interests are kids, reading, and science. She thinks she might want to be a teacher when she grows up.

Academic Preparation

Student A usually gets As in her classes and is a consistent honor roll student. In grade 7 Student A is taking advanced math. She is getting an A in the class and always finishes her homework on time and helps her classmates who struggle. In her other core subjects, such as reading/English, science, and social studies, she is getting As as well. If a teacher offers extra credit to boost a grade, she'll do the extra work if she has time because she enjoys the challenge. Her state test scores in math and reading were "distinguished" in grade 6.

Socio-emotional Preparation

Teachers and friends would describe Student A as studious and social. Student A works hard in school, and if she doesn't understand something, she stays in during lunch and other breaks to get one-to-one attention from the teacher. She is proactive in raising her hand during class to ask a question. Teachers often call on her to answer a question because they know she is paying attention. She prefers individual work, but she usually acts as a leader during group activities or projects. Sometimes she gets anxious about homework because she pressures herself to complete it perfectly and does not have a lot of time for homework. Student A does not have after school or extracurricular activities because she must be home to care for her siblings while her caregivers are at work.

Logistical Preparation

Student A's mother and her extended family live in the area. She is interested in staying in the area to be close to family.

Financial Preparation

Student A has not yet talked with her guardians or parents about paying for college, as it is not a topic that is often discussed in her home. She is the oldest child, her parents are inconsistently in her life, and her relatives have not yet focused on post-high school plans for her or her siblings.

Student B

Student B is a grade 9 student at George Smith High School. This year the school counselor came to his homeroom to talk about preparing for college and careers and asked the students to complete a college and career survey that included questions about interests and hobbies, academic strengths and talents, college and career preparation, and leadership qualities.

Student B's father went to community college and works full time as a welder; his mother is no longer a part of his life, although she still frequents the area. Student B is the youngest of three children. Because his father works, he has participated in after school programs since elementary school. Over the summer he helps at a local farm. His sister, the oldest child, is in the military, having joined immediately after high school, and his brother is a senior at the county high school. When his sister comes home, she takes him on hunting and fishing excursions. During these trips, she talks about her work in the military in computer programming and security and what it is like to live in other parts of the country and world. In filling out the college and career survey, Student B noted he would like to travel and see the world like his sister. He's not sure about going to college because his sister gets to travel and she did not go to college. He likes science and technology, particularly using his phone for social media and games. He struggles in math. He thinks that he might be interested in computers like his sister, but he doesn't know exactly what the computer field is.

Academic Preparation

Student B usually gets Cs in his classes; he often struggles in math and earned a D in grade 8 math. His state test score was in the "apprentice" range. In grade 9, he was placed in an algebra class. He has managed to get a C but continues to struggle. He generally gets Cs in his other core subjects, such as English, science, and history. He likes science and thrives in the classroom when lessons and assignments are more hands on, like his after school program experience. On those assignments in science class, he usually earns As. He tends to struggle in classes that require memorizing facts and formulas and taking multiple-choice tests. He seems to thrive

when the content is more closely related to his own life or experiences.

Socio-emotional Preparation

Teachers and friends would describe Student B as easygoing and nice when he is comfortable with you; otherwise, he is a bit shy. He is comfortable with a C average. He likes to take his time to understand his work, and he prefers working individually at his own pace. When he is working in a group setting, he usually goes along with everyone but does not lead the group. If he does not understand something, sometimes he asks the teacher for help during lunch, depending on his relationship with the teacher. He doesn't usually raise his hand to ask questions or participate during class, but he is responsible about handing in homework on time, and at home he does not need prodding to complete assignments.

Logistical Preparation

Student B is looking to leave his hometown like his sister in the military. When thinking about life after high school, he would like to have a job in a profession that can help support his family but he doesn't think he needs a college education. He doesn't think he needs to start planning for college.

Financial Preparation

Student B's dad will be paying his older son's community college expenses with a mix of need-based grants and loans, and he will have limited savings available for Student B in three years. Student B has not talked with his father or other family member about paying for education after high school.

Student C

Student C is a grade 11 student at Central High School. She talked to her school counselor about preparing to take the ACT in the spring. She hopes her score will be high enough to open doors for grants and scholarships.

Her stepfather is an electrician. He attended technical school, completed an apprenticeship to be a licensed electrician, and works full time. Her mother dropped out of community college and regularly changes jobs. Student C and her stepdad do not get along, so she is mostly living on her own between the couches of friends or other relatives and sometimes on the street. Student C has a part-time job in the service industry on weekends. She has a younger sister in grade 9, whom she sees mainly at school. Both sisters are active in indoor track in the fall/winter and in theater. Student C has participated in track and theater since her freshman year in high school. She wants a sports-related career, and she is thinking about working in the healthcare industry or sports journalism.

Academic Preparation

Student C usually gets As and Bs with some effort. With track practice or theater rehearsal and part-time work on the weekends, she has a hard time staying after school when she needs extra help from a teacher. She is on track to graduate from high school. She took algebra I in grade 9, geometry in grade 10, and is taking algebra II in grade 11, which will be her last high school math class. Her grades in math were passing (Bs), and her state math scores were in the “proficient” category. She surprised herself when she earned an A in biology II (anatomy/physiology). She liked the class because it helped her think about getting better at sports.

Socio-emotional Preparation

Student C is very responsible; she rarely misses a track practice or competition or a theater rehearsal, and she is always on time for her part-time job on the weekends. With these extracurricular activities, she has difficulty always excelling in academics, but she manages to complete her homework on time. Student C likes group work in school because she is a natural leader and does not want to let others down. When she works alone on homework or other assignments, she is more concerned about completion than quality. If teachers provide extra credit opportunities, she completes them only if she feels her grade needs a boost; otherwise, she is satisfied with her grades. When she doesn't understand something in class, she rarely raises her hand or asks the teacher during lunch; rather, she will ask a friend. Student C is popular and likes school because she gets to hang out with her friends. She is nervous about life after high school because her friends and sports teammates will not stay together.

Logistical Preparation

Having her own car, which she bought with money saved from her part-time job, Student C can drive her sister and herself to track practice and meets and theater rehearsals. Since she has been mostly out of the house since her stepdad moved in, it was important for Student C to learn to drive and have a car. She is looking for colleges within commuting distance because the idea of leaving her sister is difficult.

Financial Preparation

Student C has talked to her school counselor about scholarships, including sports scholarships. She is talking to her mom about financial aid. She is trying to save as much money as she can for college from her part-time job.