

For the Good of the Team

You teach in a city in which many of the students drop out of school, and the only type of job they are qualified for is unskilled work. The city also struggles to keep its youth off the streets and out of criminal activity. You are a history teacher in senior high, and most of your students are seniors. One student you particularly admire is Bruce. One of four children, he was raised by his mother. His father left when he was eight, and Bruce has been treated like the "man of the family" ever since. You think he has borne his responsibility admirably. He is a kind and mature young man.

Bruce is also a star athlete. In fact, as captain of the football team and as quarterback, he led his team to the state championship, the most positive news for the high school in twenty years. Bruce's coach has told you that college scouts are quite interested in Bruce, and that all he needs to do is graduate from high school with a C average and he will be admitted to any one of the major universities that have nationally ranked athletic programs. Bruce could be heading for a professional football career.

As much as you admire Bruce, he never has been a strong student. He is courteous in class, participates in discussions frequently, but his writing and test-taking ability are weak. He has not been identified as having any learning disabilities. You have worked with him individually after class several times, and his improvement has been slight. In your class, he has been running a C-minus average, and U.S. history is a requirement for graduation. You have figured that he needs a least a C-plus to earn a C for the year.

When you correct Bruce's exam, you see he earned a 68, which is a D. Both the coach and Bruce have said they will stop by later in the day to find out his grade. You check over his exam twice to see if you made any mistakes in correcting. You didn't. Then you consider curving the exam, even though the grades seem to be evenly distributed. When Bruce and the coach arrive, what will you do?