**A Teacher’s Promise: An Open Letter to Future Students**

*Michelle Hebert Russo*

Dear Students,

I will make and keep many promises to you this school year as we learn from and teach one another.

I promise to disappoint you and make you angry, but I also promise to inspire you and make you laugh. I promise to make mistakes and not know everything, but I also promise to fix my mistakes as much as possible and to find the answers you’re looking for.

I promise to be moody. I will cheerily welcome you to class only to grumble angrily five minutes later when you aren’t doing what I expect. I will begin wondering how many times I have to say the same thing over and over, but I’ll be fine sooner rather than later, momentarily forgetting the things you keep doing. I promise you will know all the rules I expect you to follow in my classroom; you will know all of my pet peeves, and I promise to be a real B about it, too. But, I also promise to be understanding once or twice when you cross my pet peeve line, and I’m sure I’ll bend some rules for you when it becomes necessary. I promise that the good will suffer for the bad in my class, and I promise to hate it as much as you do. I promise I will be busy, I will be distracted, and I will be too sarcastic for you sometimes, but I promise I’ll find time for you, I will pause amidst the distractions, and I will tone down the sarcasm.

I promise to stifle you sometimes, but I won’t ever enjoy it. I promise that I’ll be boring sometimes in order to teach you material that, in all likelihood, you will never use beyond meeting the testing benchmarks that are forced upon you; I apologize now for that. I promise to make up for the boring stuff, acknowledge it, make it as fun and as interesting as possible, then ask for your opinions as to what’s next and how to make it better. I promise to demand excellence from you, push you to your limits, overwhelm you, and then pile more work on you, but I promise to assist you in every way I can and work as hard as you do.

I promise to teach you as much as I can, every single day. I will help you find everything you need, even if it is yourself. I promise to examine my decisions and be a reflective teacher, but I expect you to make good decisions and be reflective learners as well. I promise to be open-minded and hope that you will be open-minded too. I will not live up to the stereotypical teacher standards you will force on me. I am proud to be a geek; you will see that I love teaching and learning, and I promise to force my belief in the power of an education on you as often as I can. There isn’t much more in my life that is more important than knowledge, and I promise that you will see that when you walk into my classroom. You will see what I love about what I teach and what I do, so that you can begin finding your own loves. I am a good teacher, but I promise to always work to be better.

I promise that I will try to know you. I promise to believe in you. I promise to try to impact your life, even if I’m only part of it for a brief time. I promise to let you see who I am if you let me see you too, and even if you hide behind a tough exterior, a broken home, or a broken heart, I promise to keep looking for you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Russo