September 2, 2015

Dear Students,

Summer flew by and I’m ready to start another school year. Unfortunately, my summer was consumed by too much drama so I can’t wait to return to school. I hope I don’t bring the drama with me! I’d like to share more on my crazy summer and introduce myself to you detailed in the following letter. I can’t wait to meet each of you and learn about your lives. I hope we can learn and grow together to make this school year the best year ever!

This is my second year teaching seventh grade at Explorer. I’m proud to say I have an excellent team and I know we will work together to help all of our students succeed. Before I was granted the opportunity to teach at Explorer, I taught at Columbia Elementary for ten years, and six of those years I spent teaching fifth grade. Although, each new grade I teach, I love, I have a feeling seventh will be my favorite!

While I was teaching at Columbia I also went to college to obtain my Masters in Education. It was challenging to attend school, work full time and raise my two children but I knew with determination and the support of friends and family I could do it. Three years before I went back for my Masters, I was in school learning how to teach children ages Kindergarten through eighth grade at Antioch University in Seattle. Previously, I taught preschool and was ready for a change. My children were in elementary school at the time and they just figured all parents worked full time and attended school full time. When I finished my schooling my children, friends and family were very proud of my persistence to achieve my goals.

Speaking of my family, I have an awesome son Lance, who is eighteen, and attends Kamiak and my amazing daughter Makayla, who is twenty, and attends University of Washington. Two summers ago I married my wonderful best friend Todd and we couldn’t be happier living in Mukilteo with our adorable three year old puggle Princess Pepper Peach. My son Lance is autistic and lives in a group home but I’m so happy that I’m able to visit him at least three times a week. We love to go on walks together and eat really HUGE salads. My daughter lives at UW during the school year so when she is home we love to walk Pepper and watch too much T.V. I have two step daughters, Kelsey twenty, attends Cal Poly, and Carissa twenty-four, and she graduated from WSU. My husband and I spend our summer days at our new house in Arizona avoiding snakes and scorpions or our back yard in Washington tossing the ball for Pepper. She loves to find mischief and even eat our plants!

Plants remind me of long, hot days weeding our huge back yard with my Dad. I grew up on Whidbey Island and when I was twelve years old I moved from my dad’s house, leaving behind my horse Cheriko, to live with my mom in West Seattle. I wanted to be closer to my new baby sister and I think at heart I’m a city girl or at least a suburb girl. I attended Catholic middle and high school in Seattle. My high school was considered an extremely hard prep school to prepare students for college. Surprisingly, I moved to California with my mom and little sister my third year of high school and the classes I took at my prep school were advanced so I ended up graduating a year early. My goal was to go to college but I was distracted by life. I ended up moving back to Washington and life did lead me to community college to obtain my early childhood degree, but I also got married and had my two children when I was only twenty-two and twenty-four years old. I wouldn’t trade my kiddos for anything but waiting until you are older to get married and have children is always my advice!

Although, I usually give excellent advice, and make pretty good choices, I couldn’t avoid the drama this summer! First of all, my husband and I always dreamed of buying a house somewhere hot to vacation and live part of the year when we retire. We worked hard and saved money and last June our dream came true. We bought a house in Arizona! I drove down there with my husband and it only took us twenty-four straight hours. We were super tired but overjoyed to arrive at our new home. He stayed for a week and helped me fix up the house. I tried to take a break one day and went for a lovely bike ride until a vicious dog bit me in the leg. I was a bloody, teary mess! My husband returned to Washington later that week after I recovered and my best friend and my God daughter arrived for an amazing visit. We swam in the pool and watched way too many *Pretty Little Liars* episodeson Netflix. Then back to the drama, my son arrived and it didn’t go well. He’s autistic and couldn’t deal with the changes and found himself anxious and tired from lack of sleep. After he returned to Washington my mom came for a visit. The first couple days were super busy and very enjoyable but I forgot to mention sweet little Pepper was also in Arizona with us. She is a stinker and ate my Mom’s Tylenol PM that she left in a bag on the floor. We rushed Pepper to the vet and later to a hospital. Her life hung in limbo for three days at the hospital and we thought she was going to die! I cried and cried! Luckily, and mostly the phenomenal vets, saved my Pepper. To end my Arizona trip my daughter arrived with smiles and hugs, mostly for Pepper! We experienced a much calmer week together. She drove back to Washington with me and we even were able to see The Grand Canyon and The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. One might think the drama ended with my return to Washington but within my first week back two of my neighbor’s houses burned down and my step grandpa ended up in the hospital. My Grandma is in her eighties and the strongest woman I know. She was able to help him through the ordeal of heart surgery! I hope I’ve made it clear that I’m ready for an uneventful school year UNLESS it’s an exciting, positive event!

Unfortunately, I must come to a close but I hope to express how excited I am to go on this adventure of learning and growing with all of you. I know we will have our ups and downs and I hope you know that I’m here for ALL of you! We are in this together and I know with kindness, persistence and hard work we will succeed to make our goals! Please remember that YOU are in charge of YOUR education!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Pietzsch (pronounced peach like the fruit)