

Dear Students,

We did it! Woohoo! We made it to summer. Yes, certain days crawled by and were unconventional towards the end, but it seems like just yesterday that we were learning each other's names (for most of you, it has been 2 years, WOW!!). Then we blinked and another year was in the books. I usually won't admit it, but a part of me gets a little emotional when I say goodbye and ship you off to the next grade, that is why I followed most of you to 8th grade...LOL, with that being said I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our time together. Because you matter.

Thank you for filling my desks each day and making my room full of life and laughter. Thank you for making me smile, and saying just the perfect thing to bring my spirits up on a bad day. Thank you for sharing your life with me through writing and conversation. Thanks for keeping me up on the modern lingo, newest YouTube videos, and dance moves. You keep me young. You give my job meaning.

I'm sorry that there were times I was too overwhelmed and exhausted to chat with you. I'm sorry that there were times when I got frustrated, or lost my patience after stretching it as far as I could. But mostly, I'm sorry that we ran out of time earlier than expected. I'm sorry that our last day together came sooner than I wanted it too, and I'm even more sorry that I won't be seeing any of you again next year. At least not regularly.

Truth be told, I'm going to miss you all quite a bit. I'll miss your jokes and your smiling faces. I'll miss the funny things you say that crack me up. But mainly, I'll just miss you. Even you, class clowns. You know who you are. Yep, I'll miss you too. You are much more to me than your actions.

I hope you learned something from my class. I hope you learned to like social studies in some way because it is so important. I hope you feel more comfortable with stating your own opinions and questioning things that don't seem quite right. I hope that speaking in front of a large group isn't quite so scary now. But most of all, I hope that you saw my passion- my passion for teaching, my passion for kids like you, and my passion for life. It is my hope that I showed you that you matter and that you have potential and purpose in life. Because you do. Trust me, you do. I hope I taught you to laugh at yourself and to never be too busy to have fun.

I hope that you learned to be kind to others. Being kind to others begins with *being kind to yourself*. Life is messy, my dears. People will hurt you. Your heart will break – probably more than once. And in those moments of messiness, it's easy to feel inadequate. We begin to tell ourselves that we will never be good enough, smart enough, fast enough, skinny enough....the list goes on. But here's the truth: **You ARE good enough**. Even when you make mistakes (and you will make many), even when you make poor decisions or when you disappoint others, *you are good enough*. So tell yourself, when this happens, that you'll *do better next time*. Forgive yourself, make amends, learn from it and move on. In these moments, allow yourself some grace. Be kind to yourself, and you'll find that it's much easier to show kindness to others.

You're off now to bigger and better things. In a few short years, you'll say goodbye to high school and hello to the rest of your life. I am so excited to see all the amazing things that you'll do, and the amazing places you'll go. Wherever life takes you, I hope you remember to live fully and enjoy every second of the moment you're in. Because trust me, they go oh so fast. Too fast. Then one day you wake up and

you're my age and you wonder where the last ten years of your life have run off to.

So enjoy it, dear students. Enjoy the time you have here. Make the most of it. Don't wish it away. Laugh daily. Love each other well. Sacrifice for others. And never give up on your dreams. Because if you think you're too cool for something fun or you think that you're better than someone else, you're really just hurting yourself. You're stealing your own joy before you even get to experience it. Be a kid. Live a life of fun and adventure. Support and build up; don't tear down and destroy.

So as we part, I want to thank you for being such an important part of my life story. I don't believe that our paths crossed by accident. As a teacher, I've always believed that you were placed in a certain class for a reason. And I am so grateful that you were placed in mine. You've brought so much joy into my life – joy that I will continue to carry with me forever.

Even though you will not be in my class anymore, please know I will always be your teacher. I hope you'll continue to share your triumphs and struggles with me, because that's what I'll miss most of all. Should you need me throughout the years, know that I'm never far.

You've been blessed with tremendous gifts, and I look forward to seeing what you do with them. I can't wait to grab a front row seat at your graduation (or your weddings, LOL!) to celebrate your success. It won't be hard to find me; **I'll be the one clapping the loudest!**

For now, it's time to say goodbye. Come back and see me. You know where I'll be. I promise I won't forget you, and I hope you don't forget me either. I can't tell you how much joy it brings us teachers to have a student come back and say hi, or tell us how they're doing. Because you will forever be a part of our story here. Now go write your own.

I love you all,

Ms. Holli Ewing