I Am a Teacher

By Daniel Leija
2011 Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year
2011 State Teacher of the Year

I am a teacher. I have answered my nation's call to redefine the future. I have been entrusted to nurture and develop our country's most precious resource…our children.

I am a coach, mentor, counselor and friend, fully prepared to take the necessary steps to make each student's dream become a reality. I will never waver from my course.

I am a professional, the descendant of a proud and honorable heritage. I hold myself to a higher standard because I am accountable to our nation, my community, the students, and myself. I will always conduct myself in a manner that will bring credit to my field. I actively seek ways to sharpen my skills through continuing education and collaboration with my colleagues.

I am a partner. I work together with the community, business organizations, support agencies, administration, and parents to ensure each student receives the quality education that many seek and relatively few realize. My classroom door is always open for my students and all who wish to catch a glimpse of how tomorrow's leaders are being prepared.

I am a shepherd. I openly reach out to and guide each student who passes through my door; rich, poor, privileged, or disadvantaged. I nurture and encourage each student to achieve their full potential. My students will overcome life's obstacles to become successful.

I am an advocate. I encourage my students to take risks, think outside the box, and always dream big. I help my students learn to be humble winners, gracious losers, and work together as a team to achieve their goals.

I am a confidant. I offer counsel to students who have nowhere else to turn in times of personal crisis. I offer the support, guidance, and encouragement my students need to pilot them through their hour of darkness. I will never jeopardize that bond of trust. I gladly take on each of these roles to ensure my students have the tools they need to be successful in an ever-changing world.

I am a teacher. I have answered the call. I cannot and will not fail.