

**“To truly listen is to risk being changed forever.”  
Native American Elder Sa’k’ej Henderson**

**A circle of trust forms when people come together to inquire honestly into their learning and then share what they can with the people around them in trust. I seek to create circles of trust in this classroom, much like I do with my family and friends. I learn best when I know my mistakes will be accepted, not judged. I speak best when I trust the people around me. I am a good friend when the people near me believe that I will support them in whatever steps they take in learning and in life.**

**As a teacher, I work best when I listen to the children in the room, to learn from them next steps, next questions and next learning. I ask you to join me in creating circles of trust in this room as you confer with children during writing workshop.**

**I know that you each agree with me that working with these children can be amazing and rich, powerful and surprising. Since we are together in this community, I thought it might help if I explained some of the tenets I use as I talk with children in conferences.**

**Tenets to consider:**

- **Ask open and honest questions. These are questions that you truly couldn’t possibly know the answer to before you ask it.**
- **Presume welcome and extend welcome.**
- **There is always invitation – providing opportunities, not demands.**
- **No fixing: no one is broken here.**
- **Be a witness to what is said and felt.**
- **Be open to learning.**
- **Observe confidentiality.**

**I ask you to be who you are in here. Join us as we create our circles.**