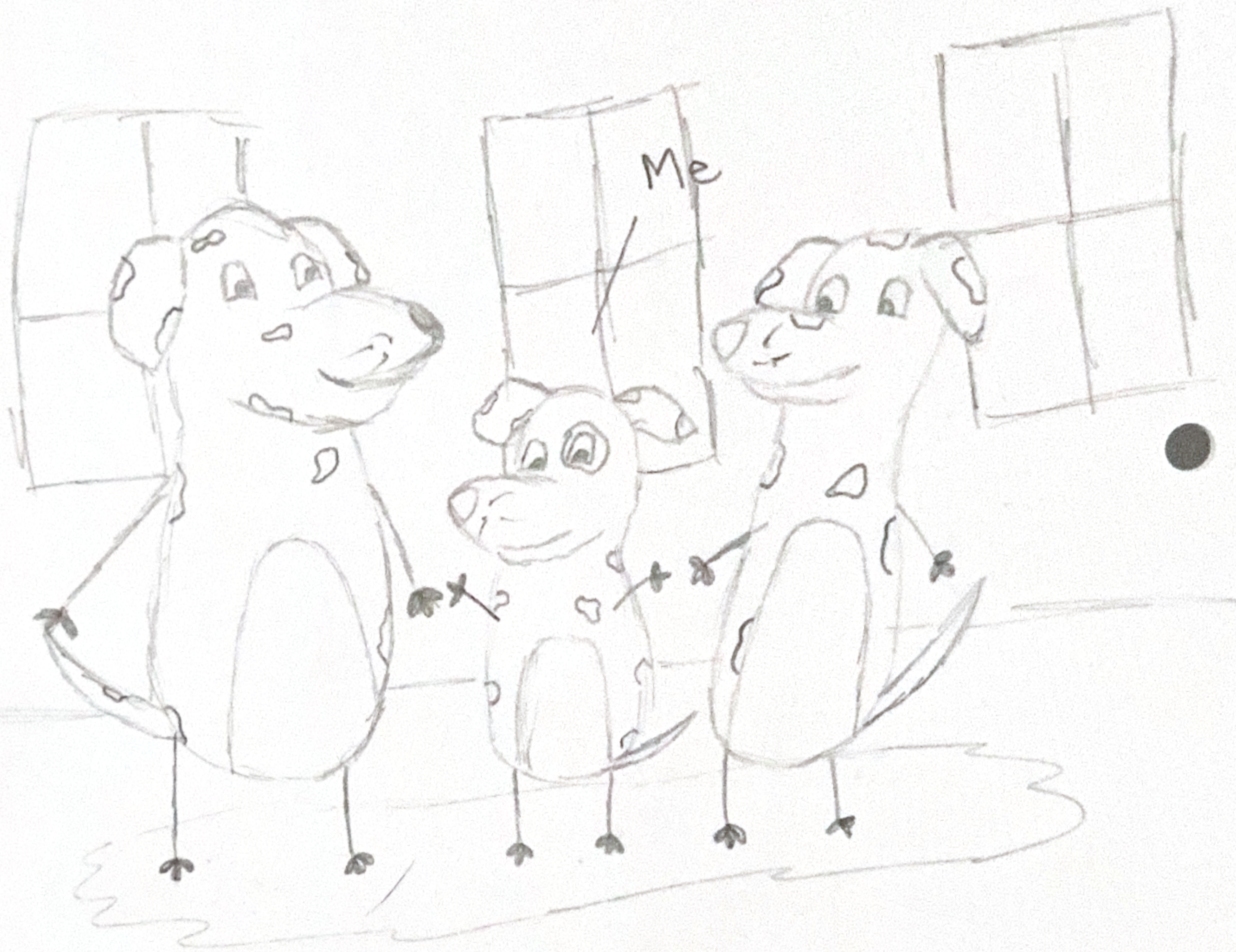


# Pinto Can Change The World



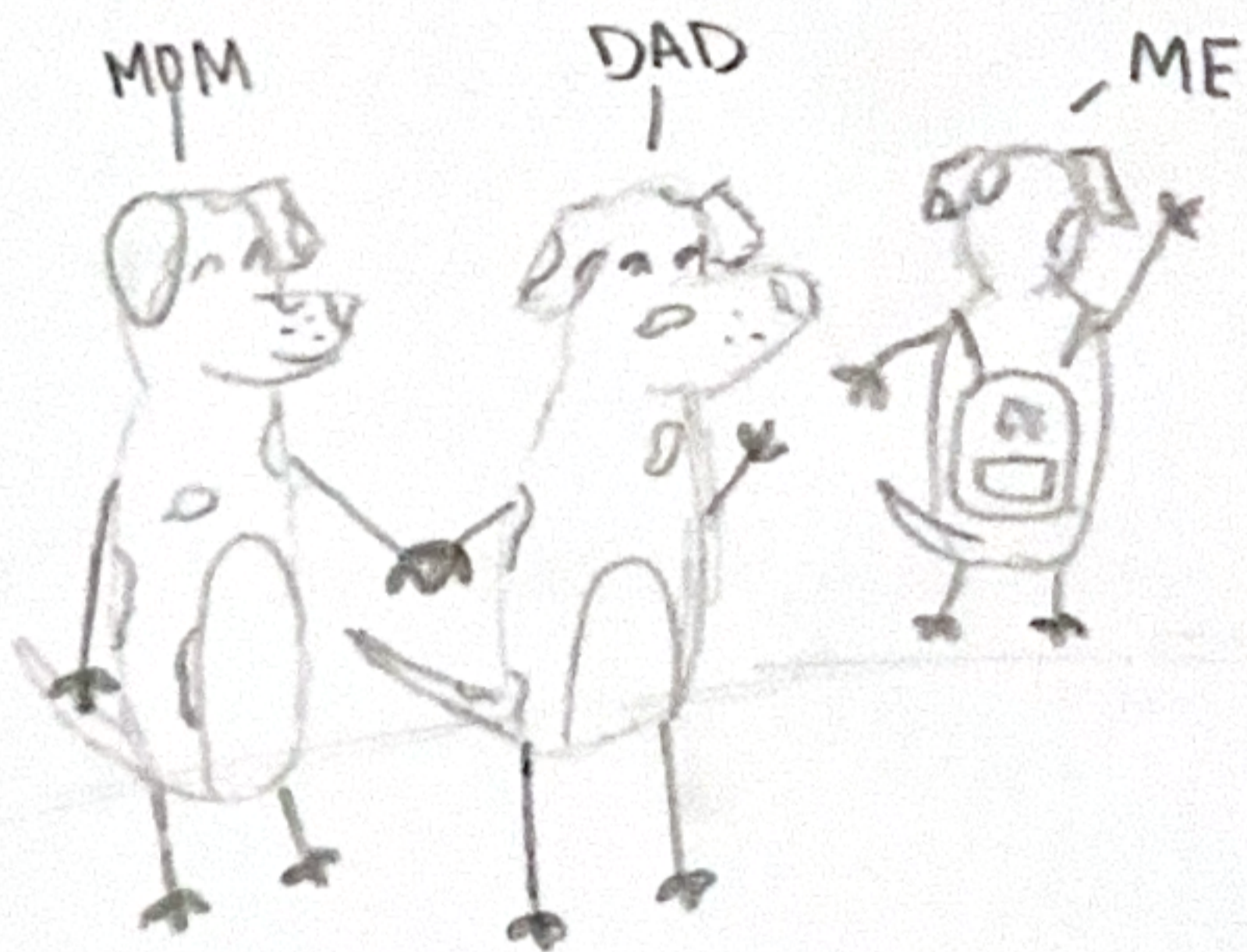
Written And Illustrated By  
Zurina Echavarry



*Hi, I'm Pinto and I'm a fifth grader at Ruff Elementary.*

*This is my mom and dad, they drop me off at  
school every day!*

RUFF ELEMENTARY



I love coming to school, but sometimes we prepare for these drills called lockdowns. Today we had a lockdown, but my teacher looked really afraid this time.

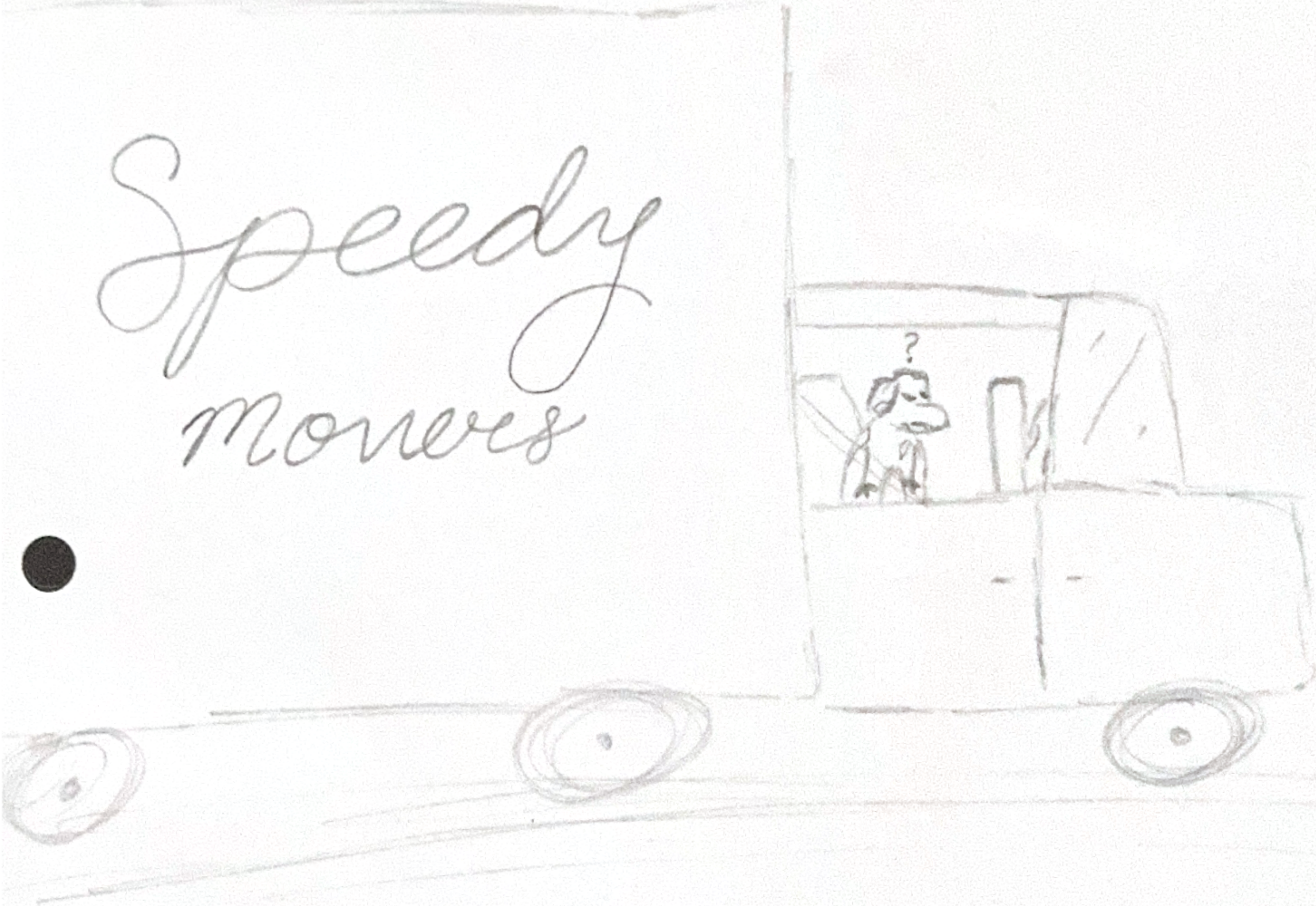
I hope my kids will be OK.



My parents even came to pick me up early from school. There were many police officers outside... Believe it or not, the local news station was there!

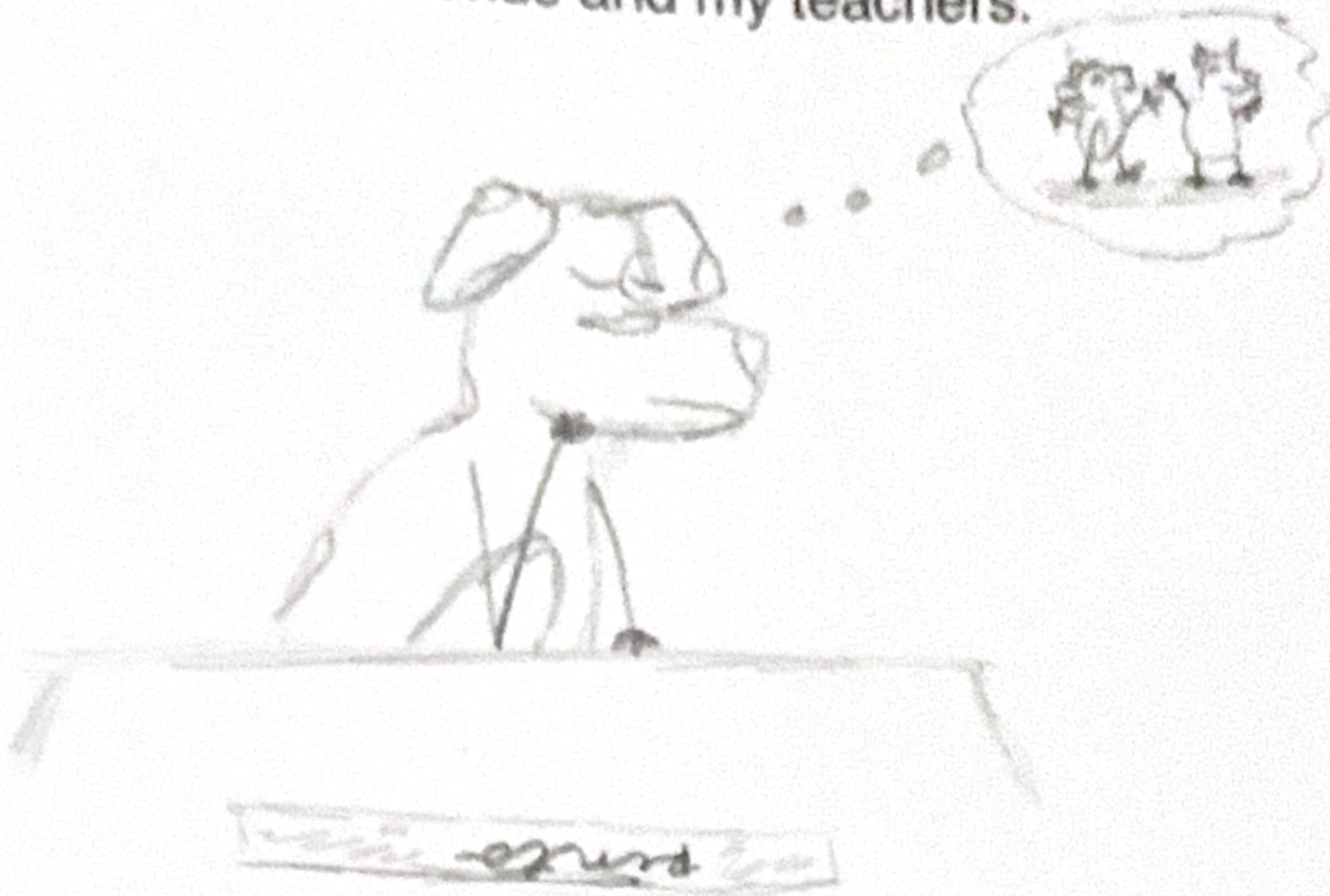


Speedy  
moves



*After that day in school, my parents told me that we were going to move away and that I would be going to a new school. I felt so confused and didn't really understand why...*

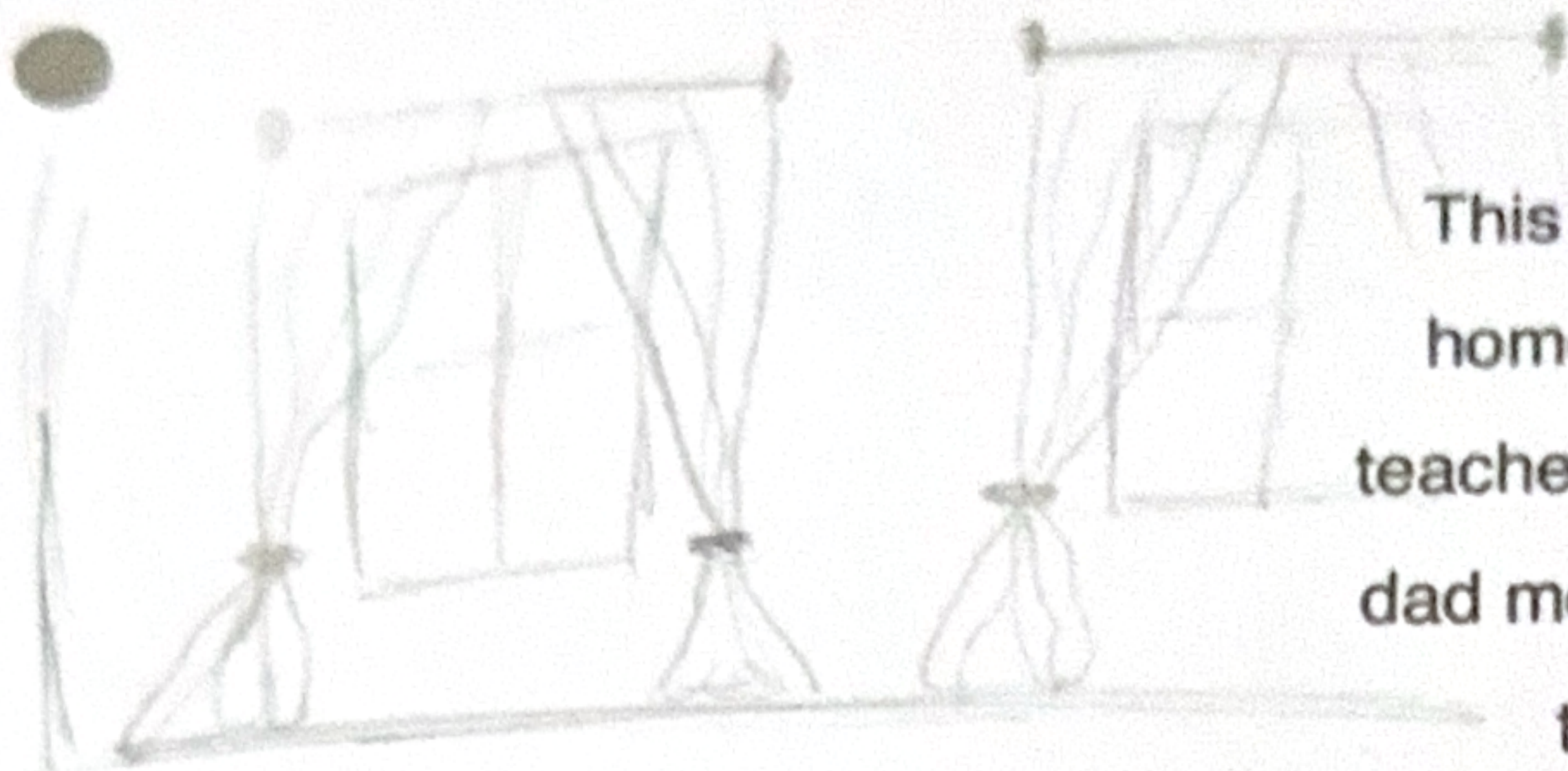
My new school is nice, but I really miss  
my old friends and my teachers.



One of my new friends I made told me before school  
that he had something in his backpack that he wanted  
to show me. I went with him during lunch and he  
showed me something that looked like a gun. My dad  
has guns too, but he told me that they are for adults  
and that they are always locked up to keep me safe.



Later that day I told my parents about  
what my friend showed me. Before I  
knew it, I was moving schools again.



This time, my parents decided to keep me home and they would take turns being my teacher. I liked getting to be with my mom and dad more, but learning at home was hard and they noticed that I was struggling.



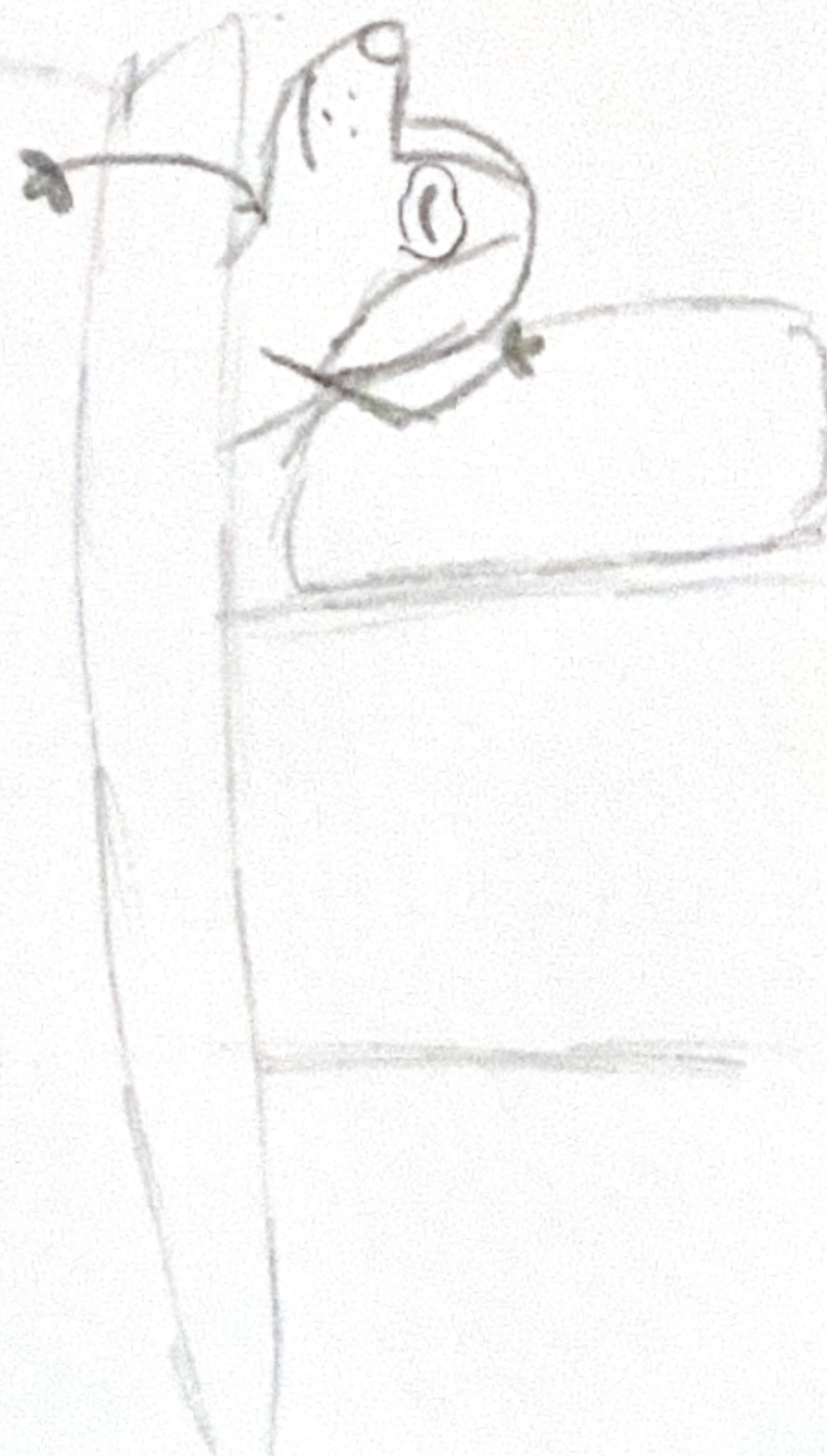
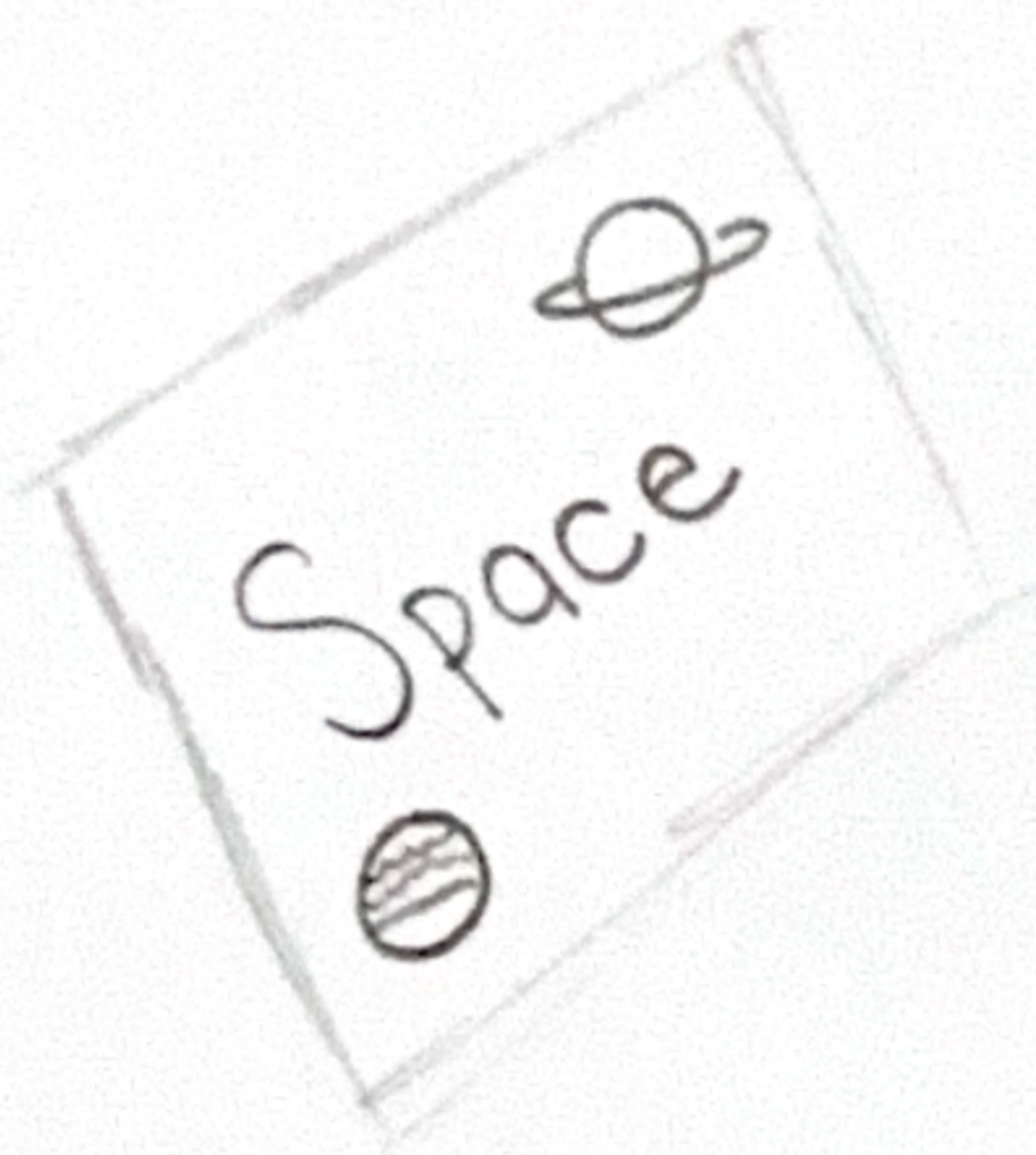
My parents seemed really stressed and were upset and tired all the time. They argued over bills and something about a college fund. I'm not sure what that is, but I think it's important.



My mom told me that her and dad needed to work more, so I would be going back to school again, but this time it was a new school across town. I was super excited to go back to school!



All night I dreamt of meeting new friends and being back in the classroom. But it also worried me... because I felt like every time, I got to make a new friend, I had to say goodbye to them.



I've been in school for a few months now and it's going great. I've made so many new friends at my school and we play together all the time!



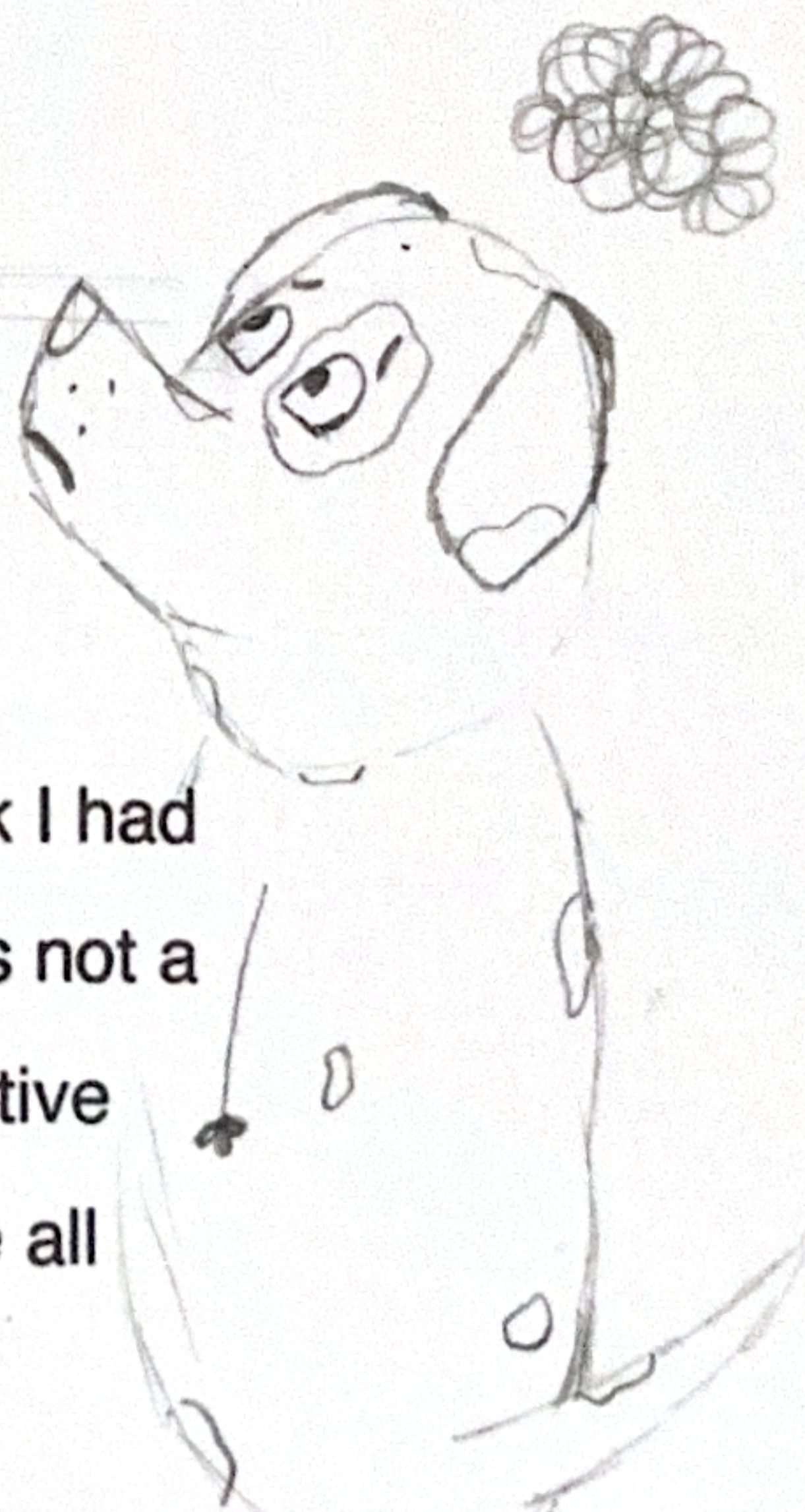
ALARM

INTRUDER!!

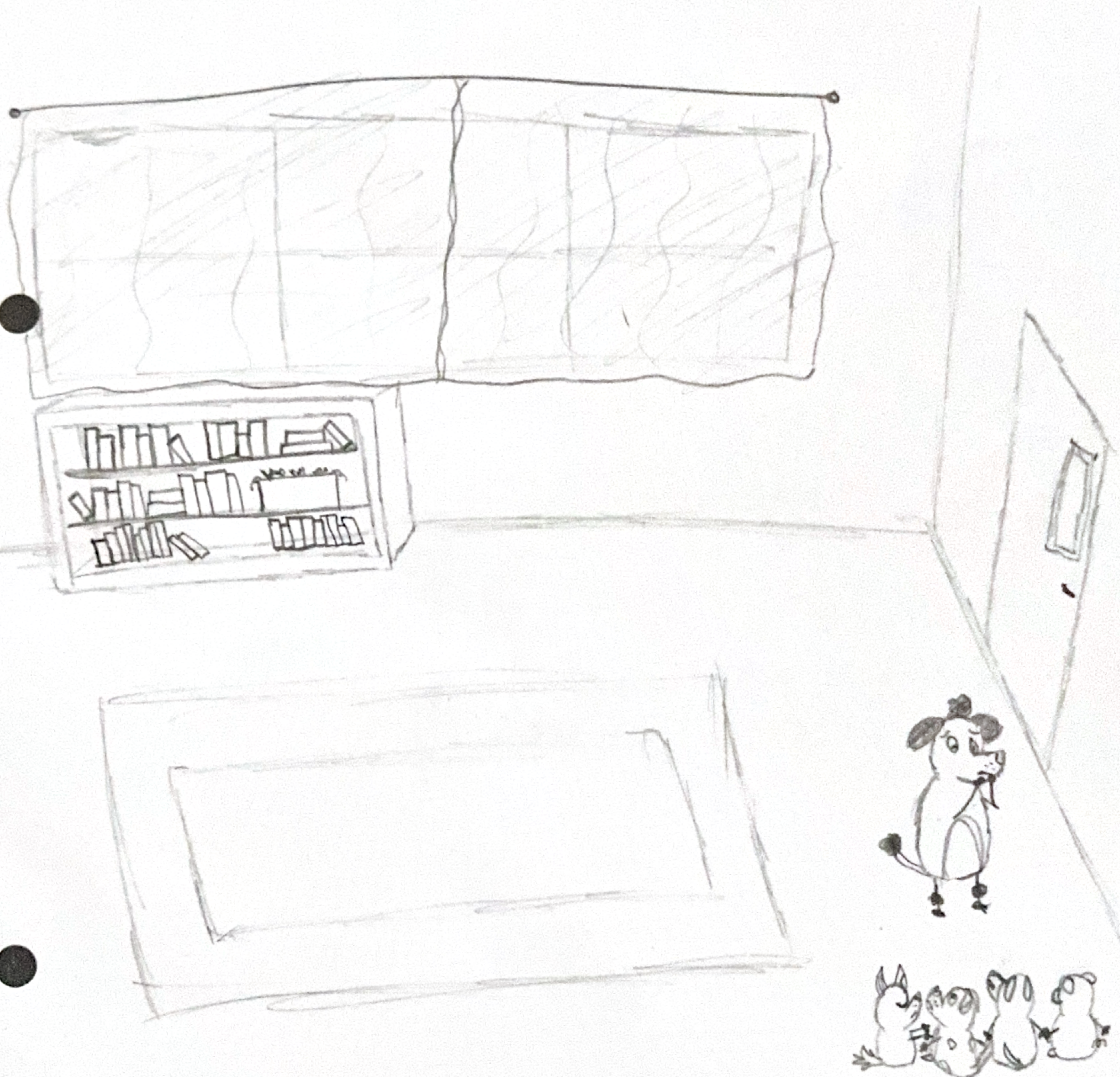


One day at school the alarm started going off in the middle of math class and it reminded me of my first elementary school when we had a lockdown drill.

My teacher had the same scared look I had seen before. She told us that this was not a drill. She said that there was an active shooter in the building and that we all needed to be quiet and brave.



We turned the lights off and pushed our desks against the classroom door. We huddled up in the corner of the room and she passed out lollipops to each of us. Loud noises echoed down the hallway and what seemed to be like screams. My heart felt like a drum in my chest. My teacher looked at us as a tear fell down her cheek. She told us to cover our ears and to close our eyes and to think about what we did that weekend with our families. I could tell that my teacher was scared, but she was trying to be calm for us.



As the bangs got closer, they got louder. I heard screams even though my ears were covered. I started to quietly cry, and as much as I tried not to, I couldn't stop. While I was sitting with my classmates, I started to think about what it meant to go to school. I wondered if this was how all schools are? Will school ever feel safe again?

BANG...

BANG...

Is this how  
School is  
supposed to be?



Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.....

The loud popping noises were eventually met with a silence. I uncovered my ears and heard sirens in the background from outside. I thought to myself, the police must be here to save us! Then the bang came back. Except for this time, we heard the door handle jiggle. That was eventually met with a loud ringing noise.



jiggle  
jiggle

Finally, the loud noises stopped, and a voice came from our classroom speaker saying that everything was clear and that the police would be dismissing us by class.

I was walked outside with my class by a very nice police officer who told us that we were very lucky and courageous...



Once we got outside, my mom and dad were there, and they came running to me with tears in their eyes. They hugged me so tight that I could barely breathe. While my parents were hugging me, I looked around and saw one of my friend's moms that I normally have play dates with. But my friend wasn't with her. Instead, it was a police officer giving her a hug while she cried hopelessly in his arms. My friend was in the classroom across the hall from mine. I hope she's OK.



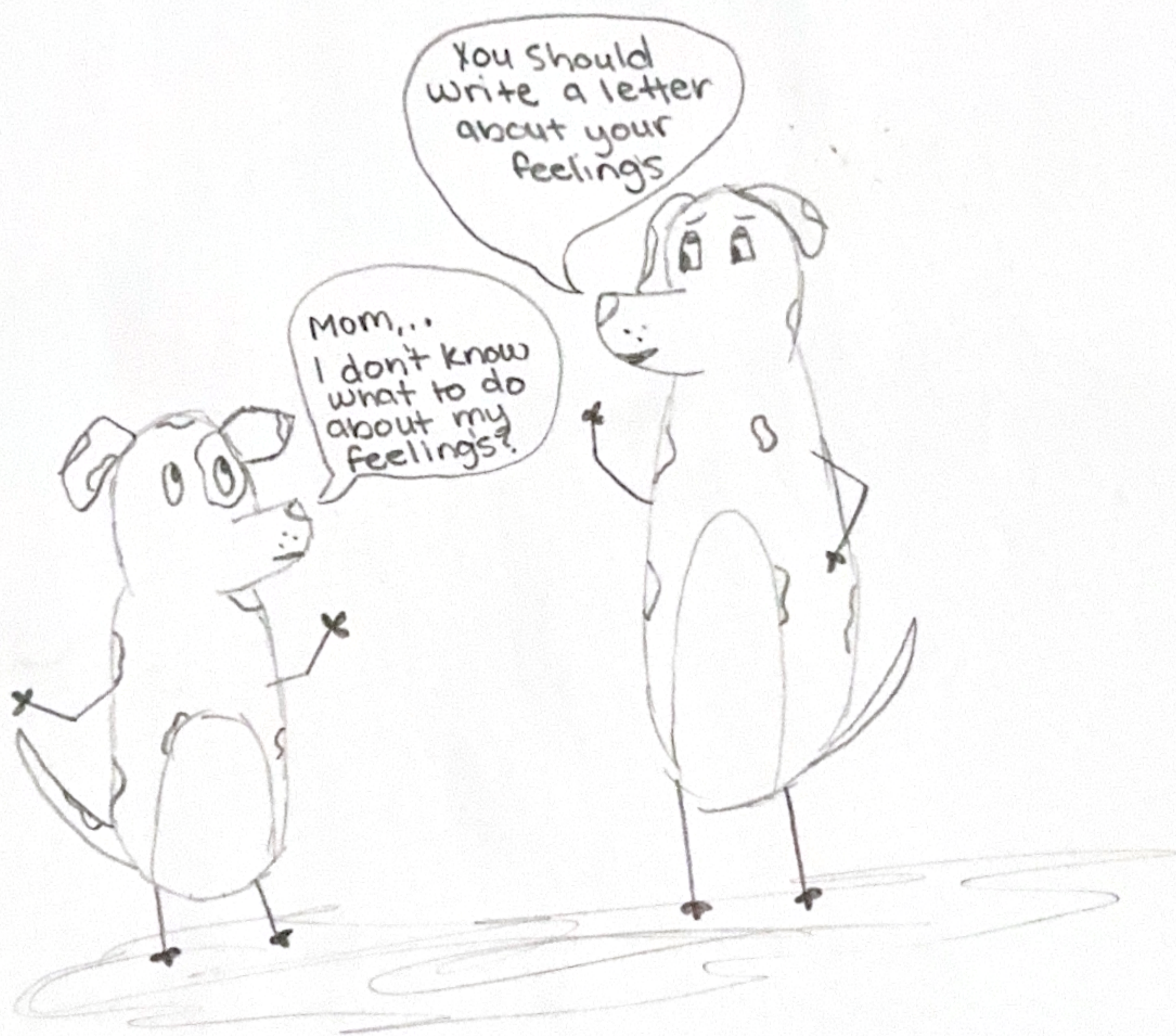
A few weeks have passed since the incident at school. I asked my parents if I could go play with a few of my schoolmates since I hadn't seen them in a long time, and they said that they needed to talk to me about something.



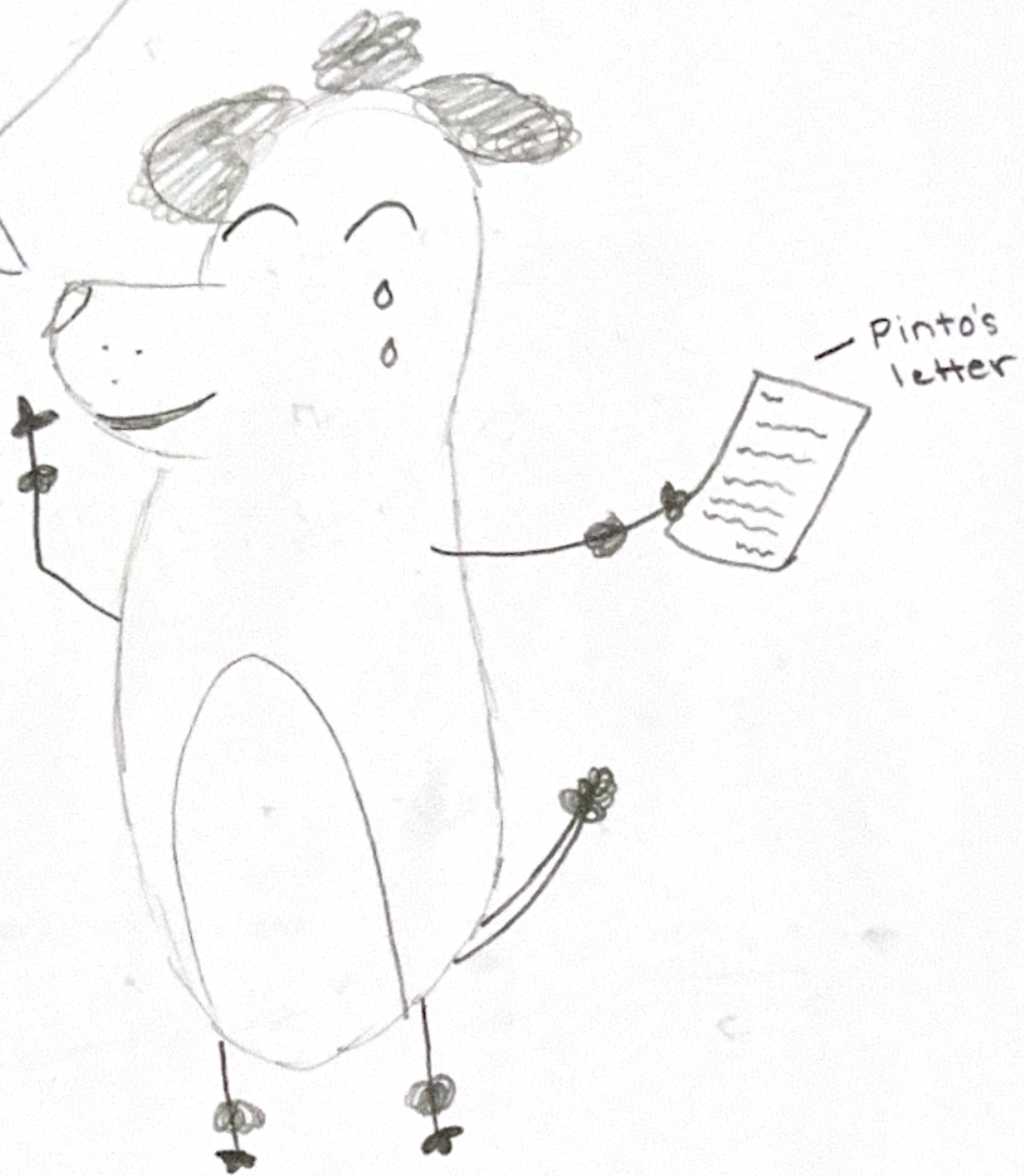
After my parents had a long talk with me about a few of my friends and what happened to them, I was really sad thinking that I wouldn't be able to play with them anymore. I felt a lot of emotions when my parents spoke to me about what happened at school and to my friends. I wish that something like this would never happen again and that I could feel safe at school and not lose my friends.



I talked to my mom about my feelings, and she encouraged me to write a letter to our local congresswoman about safety in schools and why I felt that way. I wrote my letter, but mom helped me write it again because she said that we needed to choose our words carefully. I finally came up with a final draft of my letter. It was time to send it in the mail and I felt so nervous...



I am going  
to write a bill...  
I'm sure it will  
be passed this  
time...



The congresswoman liked my letter so much that she went on the news and talked about it and she even wrote a bill. My parents told me that some very important people saw my letter and the bill that they wrote and changed a few laws!

The next school year started, and my parents felt comfortable sending me to school with the new laws in place. We have new helpers at our school who greet us every morning and they check to make sure that we are all safe. They are very nice and I feel calm when I walk into school now.



I am a 6th grader this year and I am very excited to learn in school again with all of my friends. This time I don't have to move schools and hopefully I'll never have to move schools again because they are finally safe. I now I know that when something happens, I should speak up and that my words can change the world!

# WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

Here are a few great places to start...

- [www.sandyhookpromise.org](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org) - Educate...
  - [www.everytown.org](http://www.everytown.org) - Tell congress...
  - [www.change.org/endschoolshootings](http://www.change.org/endschoolshootings) - Sign a petition...
  - [studentsdemandaction.org](http://studentsdemandaction.org) - Become an activist...
  - [momsdemandaction.org](http://momsdemandaction.org) - Donate to end the cause...
- Educate • Advocate • Donate • Legislate •

The first step in a child's learning is a safe classroom.