WELCOME!

I hope you had a great summer solstice! This officially ends on September 21, when we enter the autumnal equinox (equinox = equal night and day), so summer is not over yet!

I am delighted to be joining you at Acadia this year. I know it must be an interesting place because I left a plant on the windowsill over the summer and it grew square roots. Our four main areas of study –Cells, Fluids, Optics, Water Systems – are alive with richly steeped stories of history, discovery, luck, tragedies and innovation. Science is a useful tool; a human adventure; a discovery process; a set of glasses to help us see the world with new perspectives; a way to systematically study phenomenon we are curious about. I hope that Science is lifted off of the pages of your textbook/looseleaf this year.

I certainly enjoy Science (I think it comes from being a farmer when I grew up) and I have taught many different Sciences and Saths from grades 6 through 12. I started my teaching career in the Interlake (I have many stories of skunks, cougars and snakes of Narcisse to share from there). As I taught Chemistry, I became more and more interested in sustainability issues. When I had children (two boys named Luc & Ian) I started a Masters degree to study science/maths teaching and learning in more detail and how sustainability issues fit into all of it. Sustainability is how we can live on the planet and with the people on the planet to ensure that future generations can live as well.

Now my Science, Maths and other adventures will involve you! I am interested in helping you learn Science and Maths but also to help you learn HOW you learn and also to learn about you as a person. I want to help you construct your knowledge right “from scratch”; develop skills that you can use beyond studying Science and beyond this year; and help you develop your own attitudes toward your life, the lives of others and the living and technological world around you. I want to help you see how learning Science facts is a useful process because it gives you basic understandings that can be applied in many situations. I want you to discover how we can design objects to aid with problems or create inventions in society. We will talk about all of this as the year goes by.

Make the best of your year. We will enjoy many activities such as lab experiments, presentations, research projects, design projects, outdoor activities, and tests! You will have to work hard but this year has the potential to be great! The first need is to establish how we will all contribute to establish a learning environment in our precious (and limited) time for science. I have expectations of you and your peers and you have expectations of me and your peers. We will talk about this now and we will commit to ensuring that this is a successful year for all of us.

Please share this letter with your parents and feel free to recommend to them a book I recently read - *Walking to School on the First Day Back* by Misty Buss. M. Maxwell

*“It is a primary goal of educators to access and nurture the potential in all students by providing fertile environments for relevant experiences and healthy relationships. Students construct meaning and apply and synthesize their constructed meanings to aid them in analyzing, adapting to and enacting change in contexts beyond the classroom.”*