

# Welcome Back

The summer was unseasonably cool, but hopefully it didn't stop you and your family from enjoying those pursuits that make your summer enjoyable. The first day of school sneaks up very quickly and it isn't long before the tight schedules and daily routines have us feeling like it's back to business as usual! When welcoming the class back to Jacob Beam, I was careful to remind them that this is a new beginning. Even for the few students that have been in my class before, I have promised to forget their past short-comings and asked that they do the same with me. This will give us all the space we need to make positive personal changes that will make us better learners.

The math program in my class will continue to rely heavily on cooperative group work. Having a straight grade will allow me to more efficiently address the entire class when necessary, but the past success I've experienced with collaboration leaves me more than happy to tolerate the elevated noise levels that often accompany engaged students. We are beginning with Whole Numbers (reading, ordering, comparing etc.) in Number Sense and Numeration.

In Language, I will be working with Mrs. Phillips to ensure that the program is balanced and diversified to effectively address the weaknesses in reading for information and understanding and writing to satisfy a specific audience while meeting certain criteria. We are currently enjoying the novel "The Egypt Game" by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. Our oral conversations allow me to model techniques and strategies employed by effective readers, while our written answers gives the class exposure to varied types of question, the chance to discuss ideas with group mates and the opportunity to reference answers in the text. Feel free to discuss this book or other materials your child is interested in reading with them. It will force them to read with another purpose in mind!

In Science and Social Studies we will be studying Aspects of Government in Canada and Human Organ Systems, respectively. While conducting hands on experiments and taking relevant field trips is, in my opinion, one of the very best ways to make the curriculum most real to the students in these subjects, it is, for obvious reasons, difficult to include these parts of learning daily. We do hope to arrange a special trip for Social Studies and will be conducting experiments when possible in Science, but for the rest of the classes we hope to keep things interesting and exciting!

I am glad to be back at Jacob Beam and excited to be working with the Grade 5 class. I trust that you will consider this year of growth for your child a 3 way partnership between the teacher, the student and the parent. Keeping the lines of communication is important in every direction. I hope that you and your child will feel free to raise concerns or questions when necessary to ensure that this year is a positive and productive experience. To this end, my class (and in fact the entire Jr. division) will be sending an Evaluation Portfolio home at the end of every month which will allow a snapshot into the progress your child is making and/or areas that are in need of further attention. You will be asked to indicate that you have examined the portfolio by signing and then return with your child so we can continue adding material to it.