Dear Science Teacher,

I am on your side. I love science and I love teaching – and I really appreciate science teachers. I became a science educator because I had a really great science teacher who became my professional mentor and personal friend. So, I know enough – and I’m proud to say that I have had the pleasure of working with many of you in the north central Texas area.

In less than a month – as we have continued to do for years – most of you will be converging in Dallas for the annual Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching – one of the most awesome events ever, truly. As you look forward to meeting up with your own professional friends and to learning more ways to serve your students even better, please take a minute to reach out to your personal teammates (there with you on those front lines now) who will likely be just a little jealous, justifiably!

On Wednesday, November 19, the Teacher Development Center at The University of Texas at Dallas is going to be happily engaged too. Hosted by the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, we will be learning more about The TerraMar Project; see http://theterramarproject.org. From 6:00-7:00 pm, Ghislaine Maxwell (Founder and President of The TerraMar Project, all the way from New York City) is going to share her amazing story with any and all lifelong learners, right here in Richardson... and everywhere else via live streaming online: Advancing a Platform for Transformation of the High Seas.

The important thing is that this event offers a special opportunity for you to connect with your local peers right now. We expect you’ll be busy getting ready for a few days of focused edutainment at CAST, so we have specifically designed this seminar for a ‘non-science’ audience. The TerraMar Project is a perfect example of the inter-connectedness of all of the topics and tools that matter today. Encourage your partners in education to attend the live talk at UT Dallas. We are having a fun ‘welcome’ reception from 5:00-5:45 pm so that folks can meet Ghislaine before the multimedia presentation at 6:00 pm.

Before you get jealous, be advised that Ghislaine is speaking at UT Dallas on Wednesday only because she’s a featured speaker at CAST on Thursday! Check out the JAM session ISEA Presents: Investigating the Oceans. Ghislaine will provide an in-depth look into the problems currently plaguing the most ignored and least explored part of the planet: the ocean. An avid explorer and marine scientist, she has spent much of the last decade investigating the problems that plague the seas firsthand. During this session, she will share her experiences and offer creative solutions to some of the world’s biggest problems.

We’ve already tested this concept at UT Dallas. Our own McDermott Library has created a wonderful exhibit about the Ocean to feature the interdisciplinary ‘lure of the High Seas’ that touches nearly every one of our Schools; it’s on display all month. I’ve initiated meetings with several Deans and their professors and researchers that have garnered financial and practical support. I expect you’ll be hearing a lot more about the TerraMar Project in Texas after this fall. We have arranged for two round table meetings focused on scientific research and educational outreach for key faculty earlier in the day on the 19th. It will be so excellent to see people from across campus exchange ideas in the Teacher Development Center’s conference room – and beyond!

So I know you can do this... (and I hope you’ll share my excitement for realizing the potential on your campus). First of all, add the Thursday session to your CAST schedule for Nov 20! Second, check out the details about the free, public Seminar for LifeLong Learners at http://www.utd.edu/~rnix. Third, and most importantly, please make an effort to talk about this to the other teachers, staff, administration, parents, and volunteers on your campus. While the seminar might not be exactly appropriate for your students, this sort of cross-cutting professional development opportunity is rare in my experience. We aim to create more similar events because they have always been so successful in the past. I wouldn’t be surprised if The TerraMar Project visit to Texas ‘blows us all out of the water’ and catches us each ‘hook, line, and sinker’! This single event can catalyze a tsunami.

You can find the latest updates and additional supporting materials on my faculty website at http://www.utd.edu/~rnix, so share the mini-poster and other items and don’t hesitate to email rnix@utd.edu if you have questions or ideas to take this even further!

Thanks in advance for your continued dedication.

Most respectfully,

Rebekah K Nix