

Babylon Union Free School District

Travis Davey
Principal

Linda J. Rozzi
Superintendent of Schools

Elementary School
171 Ralph Avenue, Babylon, New York 11702
Phone (631) 893-7960
Fax (631) 893-7967



September 4, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are so excited to begin this new school year. Despite the changes in our routines and norms, new start times, end times, learning spaces and learning tools, we will be together again as a school community. Even our students who will be learning remotely will be connected in more direct ways with their teachers, classmates, and our elementary school. The social emotional well-being of our incoming students has been at the forefront of our minds as we planned the opening of this new school year. Our readings and conversation as a district staff along with our collaborative planning as a Building Implementation Team recognized the need to build multiple layers of support for our students. We reconsidered staffing, rewrote job descriptions, examined our instructional scope and sequence, and refreshed our building spaces and décor with the hopes of creating an inviting opening of the school year for students learning in our building or at home.

This school year, **we welcome guidance counselor Ms. Sarah Abbate** as an additional member of the BES Student Support Team. Ms. Abbate will be a regular resource to K-2 staff and families offering social emotional support and resources for students learning remotely or in-person. Families should feel free to reach out to Ms. Abbate at sabbate@babylonufsd.com with any questions or recommendations on how to support your child throughout this school year. She can help to make connections across our school for students and families to make the most of this school year. Ms. Abbate will also have a regular presence in the principal's Friday newsletters.

Our Building Implementation Team **outlined a full year of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) themes** assigned to each month of the school year. These themes complement our core SEL curriculum, called *Second Step*, which explicitly and sequentially **teaches skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems** (see **attachment** for more detailed description of *Second Step's* instructional points and evidence-based impact). Our instruction opens-up with newly issued units written with the sole purpose of building a school community after the extended school closures due to COVID-19. Our additional themes aim to bring our community together through engaging literature and fun projects, building connections between our in-person students and students learning remotely.

To kick off our school year, we hope to get our students excited about wearing a mask to school with our theme: ***Superheroes Wear Masks***. This theme highlights how, by wearing masks, we are keeping ourselves and our school community safe and healthy—just like superheroes!

The creativity of the staff and parent volunteers on our Social Emotional Wellness subcommittee of the BES Implementation Team also considered **the needs of our parents** who are helping their children learn at home and navigate the changes in our schools. To support parents, the subcommittee identified key

talking points parents can consider when talking with their children about returning to school. The talents of our parents are in full display not only in the substance, but in the presentation of **the attached Parent Guide**. The Social Emotional Wellness subcommittee's work will continue throughout the school year as an advisory committee for our ongoing efforts to support our children and their families.

In addition, in collaboration with playful parents and the PTA, our **playground blacktop will include newly painted "play bubbles" and adventure games** such as "the floor is lava" to guide safe play options for recess. Our **lobby is decorated with a colorful welcome** reflective of our first book kicking off our opening theme, titled *Lucy's Mask* (**Click [here](#) for a read aloud**).

We are ready and we cannot wait for our classrooms to be filled with curious minds and laughter of our students. Thank you for your trust in our team to create a safe and supportive educational environment for your children. We hope that this week's email series helped introduce the new school year whether your children are attending in person or remotely. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any further questions or need for assistance throughout the school year.

See everyone very soon!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Davey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Travis Davey
Principal
Babylon Elementary School