

BABYLON MEMORIAL GRADE SCHOOL

169 Park Avenue
Babylon, New York 11702
(631) 893-7980

2008 – 2009 School Year

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We hope that you are popping with pride knowing that you have chosen Babylon Public Schools as the educational site for your child(ren). As you know, Babylon Memorial Grade School underwent a rigorous evaluation process and was selected as 1 of only 10 schools in the whole country to be awarded the **2008 National School of Character**, by the **Character Education Partnership**, in Washington D.C. Having received national T.V. coverage and regional and local print media exposure has created a busy and exciting atmosphere. As I have commented before, with increased recognition comes increased responsibility for us to “walk our talk” as models of *positive character*. Us is students, parents and BMGS staff. I hope that meeting this challenge will continue to be an enormously satisfying journey for all of us!

We would like to take this opportunity to describe the Character Education Program that we’ve established here at Babylon Memorial Grade School and to review a few of last year’s highlights. Your child will be exposed to our Four Pillars of Character: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Empathy, in many ways—whether in the classroom, the cafeteria, gymnasium or hallways. This exposure supports our effort in promoting positive character in all our students.

Over the past several years, our District calendar has contained our Character Mission Statement that clearly identifies the goals of the program and defines each of the Four Pillars that the Character Education Committee developed. The Committee members for 2008-2009 are:

Mrs. Bartenback-6th gr.
Mrs. Berenblatt-parent
Mrs. Bruno-4th gr.
Mrs. Cullen-parent
Mr. Fasciani-5th gr.
Mr. Freidman-Principal
Mrs. Kiernan-Library
Ms. Mielenhausen-5th gr.

Mrs. C. Murphy-4th gr.
Mrs. Polney-Marinello-Coordinator of
Assessments, Data, Learning & Technology
Ms. Romanchuk-Spec. Ed.
Mrs. Salcedo- FLES
Mrs. Shea-parent
Mrs. Tillinghast-parent

We meet monthly to review and discuss potential programs and services that would support our Character agenda. We encourage you to speak with any member who can provide more information about the Committee and our goals. Maybe you have some positive insights/ideas to share with us.

Classroom teachers incorporate “character” learning lessons by modeling behavior, using appropriate literature that exemplifies these traits, incorporating the “Don’t Laugh at Me” curriculum materials, and assigning worthwhile projects that support the curriculum and goals of character development. Teachers also hold Morning and/or Class Meetings several times per week where students discuss classroom concerns and take part in decision-making that builds a climate of trust and communication. Additionally, our quarterly Panther Pride Program recognizes students who display honorable character traits each marking period. Several of last year’s highlights included:

*Preparation for formal evaluation by
the Washington-based Character Education
Partnership
*K-5 Cross-Grade Buddying Project
*Grade School Courtyard Garden
Project (mostly planning)

*Visits from several school districts
*Annual Character Education Family
Night (featuring senior citizen
participation)
*Kids Character Committee

(Over, please)

We believe that integrating character education into the curriculum helps students become better learners, friends and well-rounded citizens. Our main focus areas for the 2008-2009 year will be 1) expanding our professional sharing opportunities in our school and with other Districts, 2) enriching our Buddies Project, 3) creating a tool for student and staff self-assessment of our own character behavior and 4) implementing Phase I of our Courtyard Garden Project. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us. We welcome the opportunity to share our program and keep character conversation alive at Babylon Memorial Grade School.

Thank you,

Eric Freidman, Principal

EF/Imm

Cc: Dr. E. Best-Laimit, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. D. D'Amico, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction
Mrs. C. Polney-Marinello, Coordinator of Assessments, Data, Learning & Technology
Character Education Committee Members