

## Salt Brook Elementary School

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*Jean M. Drexinger, Principal*

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August 25, 2022

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! I hope you and your family were able to find some rest this summer and are relaxed and ready for the new school year. I would like to welcome back our returning students and families. To our new students and families who have recently joined Salt Brook, a heartfelt welcome. We are excited to have you join our Salt Brook family and look forward to working with you throughout the year.

### **NEW STAFF**

I would like to introduce you to our new staff members who will be joining Salt Brook for the 2022 - 2023 school year. Each new staff member went through an extensive interview process. I am confident that they will be a nice addition to the Salt Brook community, will work hard to teach their curriculums, and effectively collaborate with parents working together for the benefit of all students who walk through our doors each day.

- **Mrs. Janet Calvert (4th Grade Teacher)**, joined the SB teaching staff in mid-September, 2021 as a Grade 3 teacher. Mrs. Calvert actually began her teaching career at Salt Brook School in 1989 where she taught both 4th and 5th grades. After resigning her position to raise her family, she returned “home” and was rehired by the New Providence School District in 2018 as an instructional aide at Salt Brook School. Mrs. Calvert has worked in both general education and special education classrooms. She is familiar with our curriculums and instructional programs. Mrs. Calvert will be a fabulous addition to our 4th Grade team and is looking forward to bringing a hands-on, minds-on learning approach to our students.
- **Ms. Jennifer Cappucci, (5th Grade LA/SS teacher)**, a graduate of Providence College Ms. Cappucci is a certified elementary education and special education teacher with a Master of Education in Literacy. During her collegiate work, Ms. Cappucci completed student teaching in both general education and special education in grades 4 and 5. Ms. Cappucci has worked with her 5th grade and district colleagues this summer to familiarize herself with the 5th grade Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum and to prepare for the upcoming school year. She is excited to begin her teaching career in New Providence and is looking forward to working with

the students and maintaining the high standards that the New Providence teachers set in their classrooms.

- **Mr. Euris (Ace) Castillo (Evening Custodian)**, joined our custodial staff in August. Prior to coming to Salt Brook, Mr. Castillo worked as a Night Supervisor for Aramark Custodial Services. Since joining the SB family, Mr. Castillo has worked with the custodial team to enhance his overall knowledge of the building and become more comfortable with the day to day operations. Mr. Castillo is looking forward to meeting everyone and to helping to maintain a clean, safe, and orderly environment for all.
- **Ms. Gianna Del Viscovo, (3rd Grade Co-Teacher, special education)**, comes to us from Rutgers University where she recently graduated with a B.A. in Psychology and a Masters of Education. A dual certified educator, Ms. Del Viscovo has certifications in both general education and special education. She completed her student teaching in grades 4 and 5. Ms. Del Viscovo is thrilled to begin her teaching career in New Providence and very excited to work alongside Mrs. Heaslip (Ms. Mansueto) in the 3rd grade co-teaching classroom.
- **Ms. Susan Mansueto - long-term substitute, (3rd Grade Co-Teacher, general education)** during the 2021 -2022 school year, Ms. Mansueto served as a 3rd Grade co-teacher long-term substitute at Salt Brook School and worked alongside Mrs. Denike in Class 3HD. Ms. Mansueto will continue in this assignment until Mrs. Heaslip returns in October, 2022. A graduate of Montclair State University, Ms. Mansueto is a certified elementary education teacher who prior to coming to Salt Brook School completed a third grade maternity leave position in the Nutley Public School System. While in New Providence and at Nutley, Ms. Mansueto has become quite familiar with the third grade curriculum and has effectively instructed in the curricular programs that we use here in New Providence. Ms. Mansueto is looking forward to continuing to work with the students in class 3HD and to maintaining the high standards that the New Providence teachers set in their classrooms.
- **Officer Gerry Pydeski, (School Resource Officer)** - Officer Gerald Pydeski was hired as a Class 2 Police Officer by the New Providence Police Department in 2018 after previously working in similar roles for Carteret PD and Hillside PD. During the 2021 - 2022 school year, Officer Pydeski worked as the School Resource Officer at AWR. Officer Pydeski attended the Union County Police Academy in September 1986, and began his career as a Union County Police Officer. In 1988 Officer Pydeski transferred to Hillside Police Department, where he retired after 27 years of service in 2014. During his career, he was assigned to the Union County Emergency Response team where he became a firearms instructor and an instructor at the Police Academy. In 1997 Pydeski was awarded the Hillside Police Officer of the Year. Officer Pydeski will be on-site each day helping to ensure the safety and security of our students and staff. We are excited to have him join our team and look forward to working with him in the area of school security and safety education.

- **Mrs. Jennifer Zahtila (Long-Term Substitute LLD 1 and Gr. 4 Co-Teacher)** is returning back to Salt Brook School for the 2022 - 2023 school year. She will begin the year continuing her teaching assignment in the K - 1 self-contained class. In mid-October, Mrs. Zahtila will then transition to the 4th grade co-teaching classroom as a special education teacher. Prior to joining Salt Brook, Mrs. Zahtila taught in a K - 2 self-contained classroom in the Madison Public School System. She is a dual certified elementary and special education teacher. While in New Providence and Madison, Mrs. Zahtila became quite familiar with the multi-level curriculums and has effectively instructed in the curricular programs that we use here in New Providence. Mrs. Zahtila is looking forward to continuing to work with the students in the self-contained classroom and teaching alongside Mrs. Mintz in fourth grade.

I would also like to congratulate and thank the following staff members:

- **Congratulations and Thank You to Mrs. Barbara Denike (Grade 3 Co-Teacher) and Mr. JJ Parlapiano (Head Custodian)** who have recently retired from the New Providence School District. Please join me in thanking both of them for their years of service to Salt Brook School and the district and wishing them much happiness in their new adventure!
- **Congratulations to Mr. Mike Wysocki** who has been promoted to the Salt Brook Head Custodian position. Mr. Wysocki has worked at Salt Brook School as an evening custodian for the past 11 years. He is excited to lead the Salt Brook custodial team and work with them to ensure that our building is a safe, clean, and welcoming place!
- **Thank You to Officer Dano** who was the Salt Brook School Resource Officer for the last four years. Officer Dano has accepted a new position in his home district. We will miss Officer Dano's knowledge, enthusiasm, and high energy. We wish him well in his new position and thank him for his commitment to the students and staff at Salt Brook School.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

All students will follow a full-day in-person daily/weekly schedule provided to them by the assigned teacher. All teachers will continue to use Google Classroom to post their daily lessons/assignments.

Art, Music, Library, STEM, and Writing Lab (Gr. 6 only) will be held in our specialized classrooms allowing for the children to fully utilize all materials/equipment associated with that discipline. As is best practice, all hands-on equipment will be sanitized regularly following use. Thanks to a NP Education Foundation Grant Salt Brook students will now be able to engage in the LU interactive Playground which has transformed our gymnasium into an active and immersive educational environment. Be sure to stop by the gymnasium on Back to School Night to try it out!

## ATTENDANCE

We will continue to utilize the “Attendance Matters” absence form located on the home page of the NPSD website [Attendance Matters Form](#). All parents must utilize this form when reporting their child(rens) absence.

## LUNCH/RECESS

Outlined below is the 2022-2023 lunch/recess schedule.

LUNCH TIME	RECESS TIME	GRADE
11:28 p.m. - 11:48 a.m.	11:48 a.m. - 12:08 p.m.	5
11:48 a.m. - 12:08 p.m.	11:28 p.m. - 11:48 a.m.	6
12:10 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.	3
12:30 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.	12:10 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	4
12:52 p.m. - 1:12 p.m.	1:12 p.m. - 1:32 p.m.	2
1:12 p.m. - 1:32 p.m.	12:52 p.m. - 1:12 p.m.	1

Snack time will be offered in the classroom (grade appropriate) mid-morning. It is recommended that all students eat a hearty breakfast prior to arriving at school.

All students will eat in the cafeteria. Weather permitting, students will continue to have the option of eating outside on the grassy area behind the cafeteria. **Please note: if an individual tests positive for Covid-19, they are required to wear a well-fitted mask from day 6 through day 10. Therefore, upon return to school on day 6 through day 10 the student will be required to eat lunch in the nurse's office or eat outside (weather permitting).**

Recess will be held outdoors weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, the following areas will be utilized: gymnasium, library, classrooms.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Our Superintendent, Dr. Miceli provided a comprehensive overview of the health and safety guidelines that we will be following during the 2022 - 2023 school year in his August 18, 2022 correspondence. Please refer to [Dr. Miceli's Welcome Letter/Health and Safety Procedures](#) for specific information and guidelines.

**Parents/families are required to report a positive COVID-19 test for a student, or any person residing with a student. If a parent believes their child has been exposed to COVID-19 but has not been tested or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, they must inform their school principal and/or school nurse for further guidance.**

As in the past, we will continue to follow our Nursing Office Protocol. Please also refer to the [Health Office Reminders & Updates](#) regarding school attendance. If you have any health related questions, please contact Mrs. Kral, the SB School Nurse.

**NURSING OFFICE PROTOCOL** - An isolation space for students and/or staff suspected of having Covid-19 symptoms will continue to be utilized. This will help to maintain confidentiality and treat the situation in a respectful manner. Each child will be supervised by an adult until the parent is able to pick the child up. Parents will be strongly encouraged to pick their child up immediately to prevent possible exposure to others.

Protective equipment will be supplied by the district and worn by all nurses. Students and staff that enter the nurses office will be required to wear a mask as the situation dictates. Masks will be provided.

The school nurse will determine when students need to be sent home. Students may be sent home more frequently if not feeling well.

Students who test positive for Covid can return to school after the 5th day of isolation pending no further symptoms. The individual must continue to wear a well-fitted mask from day 6 through day 10. If you are exposed and are not up-to-date with vaccinations, you should wear a mask for the next 10 days.

Students who are sent home or are at home sick with covid-like symptoms will be required to have a covid test and have a negative test result prior to returning to school. At home tests are permitted. You may return to school following two negative at home tests performed at least 24 hours apart or a negative laboratory test. A mask is not required upon return after a negative result.

Our school nurse, Mrs. Kral, will review all medical situations and communicate with families prior to the child(ren) returning to school.

Please click on this link and refer to the [COVID-19 Exclusion Flow Charts 2022-23](#) for more detailed information.

**HANDWASHING** - All students and staff will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times:

- upon arrival at school (use hand sanitizer if there is no sink in the classroom)
- after being outside for physical activity
- before and after snack time/lunch
- prior to leaving school for home
- after sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose

## **FIELD TRIPS, AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS, and CLASS CELEBRATIONS**

Elementary grade-level field trips will be scheduled accordingly by grade-level. These trips can be valuable educational experiences in elementary school. Teachers are encouraged to plan one educational trip per year, which supplements and extends the curriculum.

Elementary after-school clubs will be offered in-person beginning in October/November.

At Salt Brook we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that enhances the joy of learning for all of our students. Food allergies have increased and continue to be a growing concern in schools. Therefore we will follow the outlined guidelines for the 2022 - 2023 school year.

- Non-food options for birthday celebrations are welcome in the classroom i.e. pencils, stickers, activity books etc can be substituted for food items.
- Food at holiday celebrations will be kept to a minimum. Again, we must be very careful about the ingredients in items that we are bringing into the classrooms. When planning these celebrations, please follow the guidelines listed below:
  - Complete the “Celebrations Request Form” located on our webpage under the “Site Shortcuts” bar one week prior to the celebration.
  - Fully complete the list of ingredients in the food items.
  - Consider purchasing items on the “List of Recommended Items” (Located on the celebration form.)
  - Goodie bags are permitted with non-edible items i.e. pencils, stickers, books etc
  - If a child has a food allergy, a supply of the child’s “favorite snack” can be stored in their classroom for use at the appropriate times.

## **PARENT RESOURCES**

The New Providence School District places a strong emphasis on communication and partnerships with students and parents.

The [NPSD Program of Studies - 2022 - 2023](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the content that your child(ren) will be learning in each grade-level and discipline. Please take some time to review this important document.

The NP Parent/Student website [NP Parent and Student Site](#) aims to support students and parents in the critical areas of health and safety; social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices; and technology. Please review the links to resources, articles, and videos. Additional information may be provided by other district personnel and will be added as needed.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is essential. Our district and school websites will continually be updated and the district will send home relevant information as needed. Please refer to our website [New Providence School District](#) for more information and helpful links

**Please note:** All School-Based and PTA parental communications will be emailed home on Fridays.

You received an email on August 18th from the District with a link to your PowerSchool parent portal to update your child's student information and electronically sign annual permission forms and the acknowledgement of school district policies for the 2022-2023 school year. If you have not done so already, please log into your parent portal, navigate to *Forms* and then the *Enrollment* tab to complete this process. It is imperative that you complete your Returning Student Registration prior to the start of the first day of school, Thursday, September 1st. Please note that you will need to complete this process for each child enrolled in the school district. If you have not received this email, please contact the Main Office immediately.

## IN CONCLUSION

While we spend considerable time in the summer updating our curriculum programs, preparing our facilities and completing the never-ending paperwork that must get done in preparation for a new school year, we never lose sight of the most important part of our school... our students. This summer, like many of you, I enjoyed watching the ESPN series *The Captain*. Former NY Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter accomplished many milestones during his remarkable career. When Derek Jeter's career was coming to an end a reporter asked him how it feels to be a hero. He stated, "The Yankees have 25 heroes." I paused for a moment and thought...he is right. At any given moment each and every one of them can be the "hero". Here at SB, we have over 600 heroes who, just like the Yankees each have their own unique style and own unique personality, but come together to work hard, play hard, and achieve greatness. As the new school year begins, I look forward to supporting your children and guiding them as they become not only one of our Salt Brook heroes, but also a hero of their own story.

The staff and I are excited about the new year, ready to open school, and look forward to welcoming all of our friends back to school on September 1st.

Sincerely,

*Jean M. Drexinger*

Jean M. Drexinger, Principal