

ONFAITH

ASKING THE CLERGY

Prayers for the new school year



CARA WEINSTEIN ROSENTHAL

Cara Weinstein Rosenthal

RABBI CARA WEINSTEIN ROSENTHAL
Melville Jewish Center

There is a beautiful statement in the Talmud that “the world exists by virtue of the breath of schoolchildren.” This teaching suggests that our children, poised to learn and study, are our most precious resource. It is because of their goodness and their potential that God maintains our world, day after day. As we prepare to begin a new school year, my prayer for all of our children is that

God will protect them and keep them safe, so that they can continue in their sacred task of learning, and one day use the knowledge that they are amassing in order to bring greater insight and deeper understanding to our world. I also pray that our children grow in their ability to deal with complexity and nuance in the texts and sources they encounter. Students are growing up in an increasingly polarized and contentious society, in which people often look to draw facile conclusions and engage in black-and-white thinking. The medieval sage Maimonides encouraged us to “accept the truth, wherever you find it.” My hope for our children is that they will gain the moral depth and intellectual fortitude to seek truth and to appreciate the complexities of our challenging and beautiful world.