



Central Park East I Elementary School

September 5, 2019

Dear Families,

Since I started working in education, this is my twenty-fourth first day of school. Today is the best of those twenty-four.

It takes a while to know a school – its culture, its history, its people. They say CPE1 runs on “routines, rituals, rhythms, and relationships.” Early this morning, I crossed East 106 Street thinking about the rituals our new pre-K children would be starting to learn today. Those routines will quickly build their independence and sense of belonging. Old routines also helped our older children moving up into new classrooms know just what to do on *their* first day.

It takes a while to learn a school’s rhythms. Very intentional schools organize their work by weeks and months and seasons. I understand a CPE1 September so much better now that I’ve been part of some CPE1 Junes. The term “first day” doesn’t fully explain how this week and next will connect to the rest of the year. Today a *beginning*.



For this year’s beginning, I’m more appreciative of relationships. I took this photo in Tia’s class this morning. Notice an older hand on a younger child’s back. A new pre-K student had a tearful start. We already know her older sibling is an expert in comforting others. A short visit with an older sibling made the crying stop. A pre-K child quickly moved onto a busy and happy first day.

Work-wise, this was a tough summer, full of frustrating distractions. We could not have been so ready to open without so many staff members taking on extra work during their ‘vacation.’ Children had a smooth first day because this staff worked so hard for their school.

Every year has surprises and challenges. But you don’t get to have every year in a school you believe in, with people you admire. I’ve had a lot of first days. I’m never been so happy to begin anywhere.

Sign Up for Messaging

The easiest way to get messages from our parent coordinator or me is through our messaging system. It takes a minute to sign up to get reminders and letters (like this one) right on your phone.

If you have not signed up yet, **text @kb6gf6 to the number 81010.**

Welcome Potluck – September 10 – 6:00 to 7:30

Our community comes together each year for our kickoff potluck. Our parent association has a sign-up form where you can volunteer to bring a dish and help with set-up and clean-up. (If you are reading this letter electronically, you can [click right here to go to the potluck sign-up](#). If you are reading on paper, sign up for messaging!)

One reason CPE1 children cook every day in school is that food pulls us tighter. Our potluck helps bring new families closer into community, and helps returning families reconnect after summer. Children get time playing outside in our yard, and adults get time to learn more about each other.

Parent Association Meeting – September 19, 6:00 to 7:30

If you have a child at CPE1, you're part of the parent association. Please try to attend PA meetings as often as you can. Democracy is important to our school, and true democracy involves everyone. Our PA meetings always offer childcare and light food.

Open House – September 25, 5:30 to 7:30

Open house kicks off with introductions and a welcoming message in our auditorium. After that, you are invited upstairs to your child's classroom to hear about curricula and the direction of learning for the year.

Update on Paint Testing

You may have heard that schools across the city are being tested for lead paint. Our early childhood classrooms were inspected this summer. We passed the inspection, and no special measures are required.

Stay tuned for lots more information. Stay close to school. Welcome to a year of routines, rituals, rhythms, and relationships.

-Gabriel