



Central Park East I Elementary School

January 2, 2020

Dear Families,

Happy New Year. It's so good to see children together in school again.

This morning, I watched some of Patricia's class's morning meeting. Just before they flipped the class calendar from the last month of 2019 to the first month of 2020, one kindergartener exclaimed, "I'm so excited!" In our early childhood classrooms, morning calendar work sparks so much thinking about math and time. In the classroom, changing the calendar from one whole year to the next is like watching the ball drop in Times Square.

On the theme of New Year's and time, here's a resolution for our community: get to school a little earlier. As a school, we are on pace for twenty-one lateness per student this school year. We can improve that.

Think about that kindergartener who was "so excited" for special calendar work this morning. Learning happens first-thing, and every child should be part of that.

One More Thing About Attendance...

The New York City Department of Education uses a confusing phrase. What NYCDOE means by "excused absence" is *explained* absence.

A doctor's note *explains* a child's illness, but the absence is still counted. A family funeral is important to attend, but the absence still counts. Each absence adds up in a child's permanent record.

Please know that the total absences from fourth grade are shared automatically with every middle school to which your child applies. Along the way, you might look at other schools that request your child's total number of absences and latenesses. The fewer your child has, the better.

We never can control illness or outside circumstances.

Stages of Reading –How We Understand Readers

Next month, you will receive a detailed narrative describing your child's work in school this year. A report card grade does not tell you enough. Our narratives share details and descriptions of how a child is working and thinking and developing. The tool we use to understand readers is a perfect fit.

Years ago, CPE1 designed its own reading assessment, Stages of Reading. Last spring, we revised it thoroughly. Here is a paragraph from the introduction to the revised Stages:

Stages of Reading is CPE1's developmental reading continuum. Children are not reading levels; they work, as readers, in developmental phases. The kinds of work a child consistently does when reading represents the child's developmental reading stage.

Each stage considers four aspects of children's reading development: Significant Behaviors, Word Work, Investigating, and Reflecting. Those last two categories, Investigating and Reflecting, echo this phrase our mission statement's promise for "an education that is investigative and reflective." Stages of Reading gathers information not only how students are developing as readers, but how their reading can help them become thoughtful members of a democratic society. I don't know any other school whose reading assessment is tailored to its mission.

Stages of Reading is flexible. You can assess children's development in any book, including books they pick for themselves. Most reading assessments that evaluate readers with short passages and pre-determined questions. However, what matters most is not the thinking children do after 200 words, but 200 *pages*. Stages of Reading is designed to assess reading over more than one day, in more than one moment, in more than one book.

All this flexibility and depth means that Stages of Reading requires more observation than formal assessments schools can buy to get a quick 'level' for each reader. What we can learn about each reader's development makes Stages of Reading so valuable.

New Year Wishes

Again, it's such a pleasure to be back in school today. I am really looking forward to 2020 at CPE1.

—Gabriel