



Central Park East I Elementary School

April 23, 2020

Dear Families,

Soon, this letter will talk about school. First, we have to acknowledge the ongoing reality. East Harlem and our city are overwhelmed. CPE1's community has had sickness and loss. We are all wishing strength for the students, families, and staff who are getting healthy again, who are still sick, who are not allowed to visit loved ones, who are grieving, who feel this all so deeply.

Meetings for Families

Families have questions, and families want to connect. We are scheduling Zoom meetings. You can connect through Zoom or by calling in from your phone:

For **Tuesday, April 28**, at **2:00 P.M.**, you can click to Zoom:

<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/93473949281>

You also can call by phone (646.558.8656). Use Meeting code 934 7394 9281.

or

For **Wednesday, April 29**, at **5:30 P.M.**, you can click to Zoom:

<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/99732402495>

You also can call by phone (646.558.8656). Use Meeting code 997 3240 2495.

We want to hear from you. If there is a question you want to be sure gets answered, please email me (gfeldbe@schools.nyc.gov) ahead of time.

Policy, Changes, and Expectations

I think our school system has made more policy changes in the last five weeks than in the previous five years. The policies below are in effect, but please know that the city or state could require changes.

Promotional Policy

So far, what I wrote to you back in March is still true: each school conducts its own assessment of whether students are ready for the next grade. For us, that means:

- All pre-K students automatically move up to kindergarten.
- In grades K-2, as the [citywide promotional guidelines](#) say, when “promotion may be considered not to be in a child’s best interest,” a final decision “will be made by the principal in consultation with the child’s teacher and parent.”
- In grades 3-5, per citywide guidelines, teachers review “multiple measures of performance from throughout the school year.” If the school believes a student’s classwork is far below grade level, the school “should compile the student’s work and administer a promotion portfolio to determine the student’s readiness for the next grade.” This year, any third, fourth, and fifth graders whose promotion is not certain will have portfolios created with the help of Google Classroom.

At CPE1, if we identify concerns about a child’s readiness to move on to the next grade, we collaborate with families. Sometimes, even if a child technically meets the city’s promotional guidelines, the family and school agree that a child may benefit for more time. More time in a grade can give children the chance to develop beyond math and literacy, the only two areas specified in the city’s promotional guidelines. In most cases, discussions about specific children’s promotion began with families before school buildings were closed.

Attendance and Engagement Policy

Right now, the city says attendance this spring will not be part of students’ permanent records, but each school completes a daily report listing which students did not engage in remote learning. If we at CPE1 cannot verify that your child is learning on a given day, we have to report that to the city.

We still do not know exactly how the city is using the daily lists of students who do not engage in learning. The city requires proof of engagement at least once a day, but not for a minimum amount of time or a completed work. So far, each school sets those expectations.

How Expectations Come Together at CPE1

Citywide policies are set for *minimal* expectations. If your child does only the minimum now, the transition back to regular school will be harder. We all have to work together to keep children academically and socially active. Here are expectations to have.

Your child should be learning every weekday. Your child has to do more than the daily check-in survey in Google Classroom. Your child should be meeting with teachers at least once a week for live, scheduled teaching and check-ins. Your child should be doing the work that teachers post daily. And, if your child receives special education supports such as occupational therapy or speech, keep all scheduled appointments on Google Classroom and Google Meets.

Some of the learning should be away from screens. Cook food, read old-fashioned books, write with paper and pencil, make sculptures out of recycled materials – your child does not need an iPad to think and create. Your child's teachers post suggestions on Google Classroom for work to do *away from computers*. Please take pictures of work done away from screens and send them to your child's teachers.

Some learning should be through CPE1's Google Classroom. Google Classroom allows children to stay connected. Teachers use Google Classroom to respond to children's work – even work done away from computers. The math work on Classroom is specific to our school's curriculum, and prepares children for next year's learning. Sometimes, teachers will customize work for just one or two children, and the only way to see it is through Google Classroom.

As hard as things are now, we are asking each family to make sure children are doing their best learning each day. We know your extra efforts helping children do their best at home will help get through this time, and will pay off when we all come back to school.

One More Good Reason to Get Back to School

Before the school building was closed, we started planning for an overhaul of our school library. We have a guest librarian to re-organize the collection, and that collection is growing.

Our small library will re-open with more than a thousand new books. A lot will be nonfiction to support children's research. We also have new poetry and the graphic novels so many children love, plus gorgeous picture books.

Every so often, I go online and start glancing at the covers of some of our new books. It's comforting to think about what it will be like to see the books in person, to turn real pages, and to see CPE1 students doing the same. I can't wait, but for now...

...See you at next week's Zoom meetings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gabriel". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'G'.