



Central Park East I Elementary School

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May 7, 2020

Dear Families,

Thank you to everyone who was able to show up in one of our Zoom meetings last week. We will schedule more soon. Even on a screen, it's comforting to see faces from our community.

### **Update on Graduation**

A CPE1 graduation is a schoolwide event. All families are welcome. Each fifth grader is honored personally. As the younger children watch, they imagine themselves growing up and moving forward.

Social distancing forces change for this year. Most of our fifth graders have been in the audience for multiple graduations. I am sorry that we cannot come together, in one space, for them. Instead, we are creating something new for this year's graduates. After lengthy staff discussion, here is our plan:

- By mid-May, fifth graders will complete their written yearbook reflections and their self-portraits for the yearbook.
- We will have a virtual fifth grade celebration on June 19.
- On Saturday, June 20, at 11:00 A.M., fifth graders will graduate in an online ceremony.
- Shortly after our school building is re-opened for gatherings, we will invite this year's graduates for an in-person reunion.

We're going to dress up for this online graduation and treat it as something special; we will bring in graduation traditions and add some just-for-this-class flair. Later, we will have our first-ever reunion reception. What we can't give graduates in June – food, signing yearbooks, hugs – will be waiting for them at next year's reunion.

We can reinvent ceremonies for this group of graduates, but we cannot fully recreate a springtime of rituals, community, self-reflection. [At the moment the fifth graders in this video were opening their collection folders](#), some of our current fifth graders were down the hall in pre-K. While the work of earlier years follows children all the way to

fifth grade, this year's fifth graders will not have quite the same experience as most graduates before them. That saddens adults in our school, who know we must be energetic and creative to show our appreciation for the class of 2020. We will.

## **District Update**

On July 1, the superintendent of District Four, Dr. Alexandra Estrella, will become the head of public schools in Norwalk, Connecticut. That means CPE1 and the other public schools of East Harlem will have a new superintendent.

A search has begun for a permanent replacement. The parents who make up our district's community education council (CEC) are being consulted. The search for a superintendent will be on the agenda when the CEC meets next week. The CEC invites you:

On **Wednesday, May 13**, from **6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.**, you can click to Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/96189402145>

You also can call by phone (646.558.8656). Use Meeting code 9618 9402 145#.

Please attend if you can.

## **Special Opportunity Next Week**

With so much stress and confinement these days, it's hard to feel healthy. Our community has been offered extra help.

[Harlem Brain](#) comes recommended by Kenia Valentin, parent of Marcos in Simone's class. Next week, Harlem Brain is offering a free Zoom session for all children and adults connected to CPE1. This 70-minute introduction to brain-body connections will feature exercises and postures children and adults can do each day for health and mental wellbeing.

At **3:15** this **Thursday, May 14**, click:

<https://zoom.us/j/4553573962>

It's a good time to move the body and quiet the mind.

## **Survey from the City**

The city's Department of Education is conducting a survey of family's experiences with learning at a distance. [You can take the survey for CPE1 by clicking here.](#)

Thank you for having your voice counted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gabriel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.