



May 29, 2020

Dear Families,

We all are seeing more screens and less of the rest of the world. Our eyes are tired, and bored. This week, our fourth and fifth graders are trying something new.

Adults in our school have been recreating art and encouraging students to do the same. With ordinary household materials, Tanaisha re-made Vincent van Gogh's self-portrait. The swirls of van Gogh's background are ribbon for wrapping presents. Van Gogh's skin is made of rice. The hair and beard are carefully arranged cereal.



How have children been inspired? The painting on the left, from Andrea Zittel's *sfnwvlei* (something for nothing with very little effort involved) series, hangs in the Museum of Modern Art. At right, Sunhi from Cecilia's



recreated the painting. Sunhi

wrote out part of the words from the bottom of the original painting: "I like the fact that I can make something out of nothing." That's good advice for a lockdown.



More than most schools, CPE1 allows children to socialize with peers, to get their hands on materials, and to go outside. Currently, most children are having the opposite experience. Days repeat. The world looks flatter. This four-fives project is trying to wake up students' hands, eyes, and imaginations.

This summer, people across the world will be talking about how schools safely re-open. Safety planning should involve children's emotional health. We will have to support children returning after months of boredom and sadness and fear. We also have to help children come back to the fullness of life.

For CPE1, planning starts now. The Department of Education *just* confirmed that our two June days for staff meeting *will* take place as scheduled. That means **Thursday, June 4** and **Tuesday, June 9** are still **no-school days** for students. (I know. Another day with children will be home. That's starting to seem normal.) When staff work together on these days, we'll spend time talking about a return to safety and vibrancy.

Even in such unfamiliar circumstances, we know plenty about individual students and how children develop. There will be no easy beginning when the school re-opens, but what we know about children is a good place to start.

Survey One

Friday, May 29 is your final opportunity to participate in the city's online survey about remote learning. Every public school's results will be evaluated and compared. If you haven't taken the survey yet, [you can click here](#).

Survey Two

Each year, we ask families to fill out a survey about whether their child will be returning to CPE1. If your child is between kindergarten and fourth grade, your child has a right to return to CPE1. No matter how you fill out the survey, we will not give away your child's spot. But knowing who is probably coming back or moving on does help us plan.

If you have not taken this survey, it's very quick, and helps the school. [Please click here](#).

Expanded COVID-19 Testing

Our city now has many more places to get tested for the COVID-19 virus and its antibody. You do not need insurance. If you need to look for a testing site, [click to this website, which lets you search for testing close to where you are.](#)

Expanded Food Assistance

Your family is getting \$420 to spend on food. [Every family with New York City public school students will receive this extra support to help get through the impact of COVID-19.](#)

If you already receive SNAP or other public assistance, this extra money will be loaded automatically onto your EBT card. Look for an extra \$193 now, and \$227 at the end of June. If you receive Medicaid but no other public assistance, the money will be loaded onto your Medicaid CBIC card in late June. If you are not eligible for Medicaid or public assistance, an EBT card will be mailed to you in July or August. If you never have had an EBT card, use the one that arrives later this summer. Here's why I'm using mine.

Schools closed, but I have been lucky enough to keep getting paid. When the EBT card arrives for my children, I'll walk to the food pantry at the end of my block to ask what they need. Then, I'll go to my local supermarket to keep this money flowing through the city's economy. After that, the pantry that helps my neighbors will have \$420 more in groceries. After all, a one-time boost in food assistance won't last long enough.

One way or another, this food assistance helps us *all*. You don't have to apply. You don't have to be a citizen. This will not counted as a 'public charge' that hurts immigrants. It's coming so that we can take care of families, take care of our communities, and enjoy a little bit of good news.

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