



February 9, 2022

Dear Families,

After weeks of waiting for all the paperwork and hiring formalities to be approved, CPE1's new parent coordinator should be in our school very soon. Finally, we have a new parent coordinator.

Alana Jones comes to CPE1 after working as midday teacher at the Bank Street School for Children. Prior to that, she worked in several Harlem schools as an assistant teacher and operations assistant. Alana applied to work at CPE1 because progressive learning “encourages students to reflect” and “honors children’s individual creativity.” Asked what she would tell CPE1 families, Alana says, “Your suggestions, recommendations, and ideas matter.”

It will take Alana a little time to get situated and learn more about our community. That includes time in all classrooms, because as Alana has said, “I can’t support a parent if I don’t know their child.” Getting to know grown-ups is important, too. When you see Alana in person in the coming days, please introduce yourself.

Progress Reports Going Home

All principals in our district have been part of a group reading a book called [Grading for Equity](#). The book argues for grades that are accurate, resist bias, and motivate learning. Maybe we can design better grading practices, but we can’t avoid the biggest problem with traditional report card grades: no B+, 94, or Needs Improvement fully describes a child.

CPE1 avoids 'good' and 'bad' grades by giving no grades at all. Instead, we write long, descriptive portraits of each child's progress. Our progress reports are sent home before February vacation. Please read about your child's report slowly and carefully. The report will be filled with the words and the work of your child.

To write such thorough portraits of children, each teacher works an extra fifty hours or so – mostly at night and on weekends – over and above their daily teaching. Those long hours express teachers' deep dedication to seeing children's individuality, to capturing children's voices and choices, and to communicating with families.

Eunice Begins Leave

At the end of this week, Eunice will begin a short leave of absence. She is scheduled to return to 4/5s on March 28.

So far, our efforts to find a long-term substitute have fallen short. In a city with several thousand teacher vacancies, substitutes are scarce. I am hoping we soon find someone who might be a fit to join 4/5s during the time Eunice is away; we are prepared for Alex, Cecilia, Ray, and Sarah to keep moving forward without an additional adult.

End of Daily COVID Updates

Today, a student in Phyllicia's class tested positive for COVID. This is CPE1's first confirmed case since January 25. Citywide, the positivity rate among school-aged children has dropped back to where it was at the start of December.

The precautions we take are still important, but daily updates of new cases no longer seem as pressing. We won't go back to daily case counts on unless there is another surge of new cases.

We sent home four more COVID tests today to all students who have not tested positive in the past few months. Thanks to everyone for keeping up with regular testing.

Gabriel