



June 20, 2022

Dear Families,

Back in high school, you probably wrote papers for an audience of one: the teacher. The teacher read your work after school, then handed it back with a grade circled on top. Maybe the teacher wrote some comments and questions in the margins. What happened to those questions, anyway? Did you and the teacher ever have a conversation to answer them?

Compare that audience-of-one to CPE1's year-end exhibitions.



Students, proudly, have been sharing major projects, their writing, and their learning. In the lower grades, classrooms have transformed into beautiful backdrops children's work. In the 4/5s, students presented their projects to small

groups of peers and adults. The time for visitors' questions was twice as long as the time for students' planned presentations. When a child has to interact with a real, questioning audience, a child has to think.

On the evening before his class exhibition, Hansel carried freshly cut branches into his room. Here is Cecilia, mounting one child's construction – a blue jay – on a branch that night. Cecilia's students also were presenting the following day, and these days, all classroom teachers are writing progress reports throughout the night. Nonetheless, they *all* have been in their colleagues'



rooms before and after school, remaking classrooms into museum spaces. They share this extra work to support children, and each other.

Of course, without an audience, there would be no exhibition. Look again at the adults in the photo on the first page of this letter. Each is looking intently at the work of someone else's child. Let me re-phrase that: the children come from different families, but the adults are engaged because they know that these are *everyone's* kids.

It is not only the work of children's that makes exhibitions special. Teachers nurtured projects that make children proud, and families made time to be a true, thinking audience. Thank you, community, for making this all possible.

Family Outing Wednesday

Our year-ending family event happens in Central Park on Wednesday. This is a day for children, staff, and families to enjoy the park and the school community.

Children who are dropped off at school will arrive at the park by 10:00. Instead taking your child to school, you also may bring your child directly to the park.

We are gathering on the grass near Tarr Family Playground, just inside the Central Park entrance at West 100 Street. Bring a blanket to sit on, plus lunch and drinks for your family. The playground has sprinklers, so children also might want bathing suits and water shoes.

If you have a CPE1 tee-shirt, please wear it. We have invited families who will be new next year, from pre-K through fifth grade. Most don't know anyone... yet. If they see a CPE1 shirt, they'll know they can introduce themselves.

Rec Days Thursday, Friday, and Monday

On the day after our outing in the park, we have CPE1 Rec Days. Once again, on rec days, out-of-class teachers and paraprofessionals organize outdoor days for children. While they are outside, classroom teachers break down their classrooms for deep summer cleaning, and preserve children's work for them to see in the future.

This year, because our school yard is covered with a graduation tent and our gym is filled with voting machines, our rec days will happen in nearby playgrounds and Central Park.

On the last day of school, Monday, June 27, we dismiss at 12:00 o'clock. Children will have lunch in school before dismissal. Classroom teachers

will spend time with those who come, giving them all one final hug before summer vacation.

Next Year's Classes, and Serious Budget Cuts

CPE1 has beautiful graduation ceremonies for fifth graders. We do not have stepping up events for pre-K or kindergarten, but we do bring children together to tell them about their classes next year.

On Tuesday afternoon, teachers will gather their students and tell everyone, all at once, which children will be in which classes next year. Your child will know before you read it in your child's progress report, which will be in your child's backpack on at the end of the day.

We share next year's class information with all students because it helps children to know what to expect when they come back to school. Also, if your child will have a new teacher next year, you can spend time with that teacher in Central Park on Wednesday.

For one of next year's classes, we cannot name the teacher yet. Abby, who has been on leave since December, reports that she is feeling well, but will be moving to a different school in September. The good news is that our hiring committee has offered a job to a new teacher for our 2/3 classes. The bad news is that we cannot hire the teacher just yet.

You probably heard that New York City schools are facing huge budget cuts. So far, our budget for 2022-2023 is about 14% smaller than our budget for 2021-2022. Fourteen percent is a lot of missing money. As of today, we cannot pay all the salaries of staff we already have, even if we use all our available money, even buying so much as a pack of pencils. In fact, most public school in this city can't afford pencils. As far as I can tell, the average school finds itself missing about six teachers' salaries.

This week, I will submit an appeal for more money to start our year. I can show that we already have seventeen more students planning to register from first through fifth grades. Seventeen more students would fund nearly a full teacher's salary, so a successful appeal would give us much more flexibility as we head into the new year. To stabilize our budget next year and beyond, we are looking to add even more third and fifth graders. We still will hold class size around 25 students per room.

Until we have more money, we cannot hire, officially. Before each hire, New York City schools have to commit funds to cover that teacher's full salary. Remember, most schools cannot afford the teachers they already have; it could take much of the summer for Abby's new school to find the money to hire her. After she eventually transfers from our budget to theirs, and we will hire her replacement. We'll introduce the new teacher then.

It could be a long summer of waiting. For now, I appreciate everyone's patience, and look forward to celebrating the close of this year. We'll do that in Central Park on Wednesday. See you there.

Gabriel