



August 11, 2022

Dear Families,

Today, we are sending you CPE1's [yearlong calendar](#) and [family handbook](#). Staff meetings during the spring and summer shaped these documents.

In the handbook, you will see that we are planning to bring back indoor gatherings, such as family workshops, Festival of Lights, winter and spring concerts, and All-School Sing. Community coffees will begin earlier so more families – and staff – can join before work. And while most public schools will have remote parent-teacher conferences, CPE1 will go back to in-person family conferences.

That sounds mostly like the way we came together before the pandemic. The one change from a few years ago is that families will not come inside for morning arrival.

For many years, dozens of families would walk upstairs with their children each morning. Caregivers would chat in the halls and have quick conversations with teachers in the classroom doorway. It was social and energizing. At the same time, so many grownups in the hallway impacted children's learning. Over the past two years, when families have not come up for arrival, classes have been getting to work about ten minutes earlier each day. Children unpack with more independence, and much more rapidly. There's more math and reading now in our morning routines.

This means adults will not bring their children inside for the first days of kindergarten and pre-K. I've have witnessed seventeen first days of elementary school. For the first fifteen, lots of children cried as their grown-ups left, and usually one or two kids tried to run out of class. The last two years, when children said goodbye at the gate instead of in the classroom, were the only first mornings without tears. Caregivers naturally want to hold their child's hand, walk together around their new classroom, take pictures of this momentous day. That helps

adults separate. However, if children go into their classrooms having said goodbye already, they mostly focus on exploring the new space and talking to each other. That makes the transition smoother for *children*.

As you read the calendar alongside the updated handbook, you will see how the year will come together. During the first week of school, we will send both documents home on paper. If there are changes throughout the year, we will post them on our website at <https://cpe1.nyc/resources>.

I am so glad to share these guides to how and when our community will come together. It feels like start of a more predictable school year. It feels like a joyful return.

Budget and Art Update

CPE1 has had some good budget news. The city granted our appeal to fund one more teaching position. That extra money, plus our one-year state grant to make Jim a literacy coach, mean we will not have to reduce staff.

Now, Tim will be back in the art studio on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. All classes will have visual arts with Tim once per week.

I'm celebrating this extra money as if it were a bonus, but actually, we're just getting back some of the money lost to citywide budget cuts. A final ruling on the city's cuts will come at the end of August. I believe we will keep Tim and all the rest of our staff, no matter how the budget fights end up. But for the hundreds of other schools that don't have enough yet and don't know what to expect, I am hoping for quick relief.

I will be taking my summer vacation over the next two weeks. Others will be working. Teachers are already setting up their classrooms. Our staff gives up so much of their summer break to get ready for the first day. That's one reason the rooms are so inviting at the start of a new year.

Gabriel