



Central Park East I Elementary School

October 17, 2022

Dear Families,

This Saturday, from 12:00 to 4:00, is Fall Festival. Fall Festival is one of our school's special events.

On Saturday afternoon, our school yard will be transformed. We'll have a bouncy house, a parent-created box maze (at right), student created games, children's crafts, a rummage sale, food, live music, and, most importantly, hundreds of people having fun together.



Fall Festival is like CPE1's homecoming. Recent and long-ago graduates come back to see old friends. Families who moved away make this the weekend they visit New York City. Former staff come to see how former students have grown. Grandparents, cousins, and other family friends are welcome, too.

Last week in classrooms, each child made a craft to sell. If you buy the craft your child makes, the funds go right to the CPE1 parent association, which donates the proceeds back to school activities.

We still need more adults to take tickets, serve popcorn, paint faces, and volunteer for all the activities that make a fair. [Please click here to sign up for a volunteer shift.](#)

Saturday's forecast calls for beautiful weather. Bring your family and invite your friends. This is should be a spectacular day.

Directory Going Home

The CPE1 directory is going home this week.

Back before WhatsApp and group texts and emails, the CPE directory helped the community stay in touch. This year's directory continues in that tradition.

When families fill in their emergency contact information at the start of the year, they tell us whether they can be listed in the directory, and which information can be shared, such as phone number or email address or home address, or all of the above. This makes communication more versatile than classwide group chats; you could call a parent in another class, or your child could copy a home address to send a summertime postcard to a friend.

Family-to-family support is one of the special parts of our school, and the directory can help build those connections.

Acadience and iReady Screeners Underway

Last year, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) mandated "screeners" in all schools. These assessments are supposed to identify if students needed more support for learning. Screeners in a school are like thermometers in a hospital: a quick test can produce a number that tells you something might be wrong, but the number does not identify the cause of a concern or the plan for improvement. A lower score on a screener, like a high temperature on a thermometer, tells you to only to assess more thoroughly.

We gave these NYCDOE-required screeners last year, and the numbers roughly confirmed what teachers assessed in class. Some families were very interested in the results of these standardized assessments; I sent individual results home for those children who participated. Other families requested that their children did not participate; we honored those requests.

Here is an overview of what we learned in our first year with these screeners.

Basics of NYCDOE Screeners

NYCDOE expects schools to give screeners starting in kindergarten. We have to administer screeners in reading and math three times per year: fall, winter, and spring.

NYCDOE has access to students' individual scores. District offices and the central headquarters can use schools' overall screener results to evaluate schools' progress.

Acadience: Grades K-2

Acadience is an in-person, one-on-one assessment. Donna is the adult in our school who sits with children to administer Acadience.

Depending on the child's grade, Acadience takes five or seven minutes. Each Acadience assessment has three short parts, such as recognizing letters, recalling story details, or solving equations.

Acadience gives children higher scores if they go faster. For example, two first graders could solve every subtraction equation, but the first grader who solves more in one minute would get the higher score. Two first graders also might read the same passage aloud and pronounce every word correctly, but the child who reads more words in a minute would score higher.

Last year, CPE1 scored above our district's average in every grade and in every assessment, but there were some inconsistencies. For example, Acadience thought nearly all of our second graders read at or above 'grade-level,' but found only half of our first graders did. I believe that was less about the children and more about Acadience. The difference was that second-grade Acadience had a short test of reading comprehension, but first grade had none. Instead, first graders were tested on reading nonsense words, such as *lage* and *fank*. I think our second graders scored higher because their assessment involved more real-world reading instead of nonsense words.

iReady: Grades 3-5

iReady is a computer-based test that students take on laptops. iReady is a multiple-choice assessment. Students click on whether they believe A, B, C, or D is the correct response.

iReady tries to identify each student's 'grade level.' Depending on whether a child picks a correct or incorrect answer, iReady changes the questions it asks. For example, if a student correctly answers about fractions for fourth-grade standards, iReady will start asking fifth, sixth, and seventh grade questions. If a

student seems to struggle with fourth grade fractions, the computer will start asking about third grade fraction standards.

All this adapting makes iReady slower. We give iReady over two days, because it takes most students about 90 total minutes to complete. Last year, some children needed a third session to finish up. Others rushed. Children who finished in less than an hour typically got lower scores.

After students finish a section on their laptops, iReady gives them a one-minute 'break.' The test pauses and kids play short video games built into the program. Children move arrows on their keyboard to stack cats in a tower. Most students seem to like this, though I have mixed feelings because it feels as if the testing company is marketing directly to children.

Screener Results

If your child is taking one of these screeners, I will send home a letter with your child's results and an explanation of how the school performed overall. Those letters will go home before Thanksgiving.

Teachers assess children regularly in class, and often have much more thorough observations than any standardized assessment can provide. If you have questions about your child's progress, especially outside of screeners, please speak with the teacher.

School Leadership Team Opening

CPE1's school leadership team needs one more parent member to represent families. There will be a special election coming up within a few weeks.

School leadership team is made up of families and staff. SLT meets monthly to guide the school. All SLT meetings are public. This month, SLT will meet in CPE1's art studio on Thursday, October 20, from 3:45 to 5:45.

Community Education Council at CPE1

NYCDOE has elections for only one parent advisory group: district community education councils (CECs). Each district has a CEC to advise the superintendent and vote on changes to admissions guidelines for schools within the district.

The CEC that represents East Harlem schools, Community Education Council Four, will hold its next meeting in our school building. On November 9 at 6:00, the CEC will convene in our auditorium.

This year, two CEC members have children in our school: Jessica Baker (Aria in Aishah's class) and Annie Burns (Rosemary in Marilyn's class). They represent all families in the district, and especially on November 9, you can represent yourself.

CEC meetings are open to all. It would be great to have CPE1 families attend when the CEC is in our building. In person and online, you are welcome to add your voice during the public comment section of the meeting.

October Parent Association Meeting

On Tuesday, October 18, the CPE1 parent association will have its October meeting in the auditorium at 8:35. Our district has an all-day principals meeting on Tuesday, so I will not be part of the PA meeting.

I'm sorry to miss Tuesday's meeting. I do hope to see everyone at Fall Festival on Saturday afternoon.

Gabriel