



Central Park East I Elementary School

1573 Madison Avenue ♦ New York, NY ♦ 10029 ♦ 212.860.5821 ♦ www.cpe1.nyc ♦ Gabriel Feldberg, Principal

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May 21, 2019

Dear Families,

CPE1's mission is "to educate children to become thoughtful citizens of a democratic society by providing an education that is investigative and reflective, encourages choice and expects responsibility and discipline in all areas of learning and social behavior." Lately, our staff has been talking often about how we as adults help children develop the skills engaged citizen-advocates. A letter I just got brings some of that to life.

On Thursday, Lena, a kindergartener in Hansel's class, wrote me:

Deer Gabreeyol,

In the Grls Bath Room the Grls aer playing in the Bath room

The PreeKa aer playing an the Big cis to. I yont to chagn that an the Bath room is dereety to.

(If you're not used to kindergarten writing, please know that letter has some solid spelling based on the way words *sound*. Lena writes that pre-K and big kids are playing in the girls bathroom. She adds, 'I want to change that and the bathroom is dirty, too.')

One of Lena's classmates, Sabine, also wrote to me. She surveyed nearly every child in the school. One hundred sixty-four children described the bathrooms as dirty or *sometimes* dirty, compared to just twenty who think they're always clean. As Sabine's letter asks, "What Shall we do with this situation?"

Our mission calls for "investigative" students, but Sabine's question made *me* the investigator. Crawling around on the floor of the girls bathroom, I discovered small pools of water. I then figured out that the toilet paper dispensers spin freely; tug too hard and a line of paper unwinds down to get clumped in the small puddles on the floor. Our custodial staff is now working to repair a small leak. We'll be installing slow-turning toilet paper dispensers over summer vacation.

Lena's and Sabine's letters prompted small action from adults. But what's so powerful – what's so CPE – are these words: "I yont to chagn that." The change Lena wants is change among children. She told me our custodial staff "take good care of" the bathrooms, so she's thinking about a campaign of reminders for her peers. That exemplifies another part of our mission statement: "responsibility and discipline in all areas of learning and social behavior."

I'm not proud to write about imperfect bathrooms, but very proud of children who believe in their own advocacy. That's our mission.

**Spring Concert – Wednesday, May 22 – 6:00 P.M.**

Our spring concert is this Wednesday evening. Children will gather with their classes on the sides of the auditorium at 6:00, and after they are settled in, we'll open up the auditorium for adults to sit throughout the middle. Please have your child dressed to perform and ready to shine.

**Harlem Social Dance – Wednesday, May 30 – 5:30 P.M.**

This spring, we've had a partnership with teaching artists from the Apollo Theater. Our 4-5 classes have been learning Harlem social dances from the 1920s. They will be teaching our whole community some of what they learned. All children and adults are welcome to come between 5:30 and 7:00 to try out some of the moves Harlem exported to the world.

**Invitation to State Review – Wednesday, June 5 – 8:35 A.M.**

Once again, reviewers from the state will be in our school throughout the first week of June. *Everyone* is invited to a focus group with families. As I wrote before, CPE1 would love to break the state record for the number of adults who want to share responses to the state's questions.

This state review will result in recommendations we will be expected to follow in the coming year. It's important for them to hear from many, many families on the morning of June 5. Please try to make it.

—Gabriel