



Charter School of Educational Excellence

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A Message from the Principal



August 11, 2011

Dear CSEE Parent Community:

As we approach the opening of school, I wanted to take this opportunity to welcome all new and returning parents and students to the Charter School of Educational Excellence for the 2011-2012 school year.

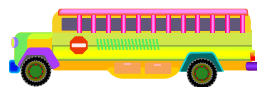
MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

As you know, the middle school has been under construction all summer long in preparation for a fall opening. Although there is a lot of excitement over the opening of our new building, many of you have questions about the timeline for the project's completion. The good news is, the building is up! We anticipate the completion of the building's interior by end of August. This timeline has prompted us to change our school opening day to **Monday, September 12, 2011**. A later start date will give the time that is required to secure the TCO for our new middle school. Due to the later opening, the last day of school will be **Friday, June 29, 2012**. An updated school calendar has been enclosed for your information.

Middle School Uniforms

In regards to the middle school uniform, a letter was mailed providing uniform and purchasing information to parents in late July. If you did not receive the letter, please contact the school for details. You may also check our website where we have conveniently posted information about the middle school uniform on the homepage for parents at:

www.charterschoolofeducationalexcellence.org



Bronx Transportation Parent Meeting

A parent **transportation meeting** (for eligible students) has been scheduled for **August 22, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.** in the MPR. This meeting has been set up with Tur Bus to accommodate parents who missed the meeting held in June 2011. New students coming to CSEE from the Bronx are not eligible for transportation with the exception of siblings of current bus students. **Parents who did not attend the June meeting and miss this meeting will not receive transportation services for their child/ren.**



REMINDERS

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL for students is **Monday, September 12, 2011**.

Open House is scheduled for **Thursday, September 22nd at 6:00 p.m.**

Our first **Teacher Coaching Day** is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 20th**. Teacher Coaching Days are half-days of school and students are dismissed at 12:00 p.m. Please mark your



calendar and arrange for your child/ren to be picked up promptly from school on half-days.
*Lunch and transportation are provided on half days.

SCHOOL IS CLOSED for **Rosh Hashanah** on **Thursday, September 29th** and **Friday, September 30th**. See the 2011-2012 school calendar enclosed for your information. A copy of this calendar is also available on the school's website.

SCHOOL HOURS are **8:00 a.m.** to **4:00 p.m.** Breakfast is served at 7:30 a.m. Students are not permitted to enter the building before 7:30 a.m. Therefore, please do not drop your children off at the front door of the school and leave them unsupervised during early morning hours. The school is not able to supervise students at this time.

Departing Staff

I want to take this opportunity to inform you that our Business Manager, Mrs. Stephanie Alves, has resigned her position at CSEE to care for an ailing family member. Mrs. Alves has been a loyal and committed employee for many years and leaving was a very difficult decision for her. However, she is faced with a situation that is beyond her control and sadly, Mrs. Alves' full time and attention is required at home at this time. We will miss Mrs. Alves. Our prayers go out to the Alves family along with our well wishes for the improved health and rehabilitation of their loved one.



As you may know, our Title I Coordinator, Ms. Barbara Schneer, has been on an extended medical leave since February. Ms. Schneer has decided to take some additional time off from work; therefore, she will not be returning to CSEE in the fall. We thank Ms. Schneer for her years of service to students at CSEE and wish her well in the future.

NEW STAFF

There is a new Director of Operations and Finance at CSEE. Mr. Robert Foley, the former Human Resources Associate and Operations Assistant from Victory Schools, Inc., joined CSEE on August 1st. Mr. Foley comes to us with an extensive background and experiences in the operations and management of charter schools having worked with our management company, Victory Schools. While at Victory, Mr. Foley fulfilled a number of duties that included providing technical assistance, professional development to business managers and performing a number of varied personnel office functions. Most recently, Mr. Foley worked for Spiegel Consultants in New York, NY, as a Project Coordinator. There he worked with subcontractors and architects to manage major construction projects in New York City. Mr. Foley is a holder of a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a major in Business Management from Pace University. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Foley to our operations team and wishing him a successful transition back to the charter school world.



STAFF PROMOTIONS

CSEE takes great pride in promoting staff from within the organization, as we believe that investing in the staff and their professional development ultimately leads to a stronger and more stable school community that benefits all.

With a growing school and increased student enrollment, we have added administrative personnel for the upcoming year. I am proud to introduce and welcome our new *Assistant Principal*, Mrs. Cindy Lopez. Many of you may know Mrs. Lopez as a fourth grade teacher. However, Mrs. Lopez recently completed a Master's Degree in Building Leadership at Mercy College and following an extensive administrative internship here at CSEE, she is ready to take on full time administrative responsibilities. She has successfully coordinated both after school and summer school programs here at CSEE for the past two years. Mrs. Lopez has had a number of accomplishments as a classroom teacher. She achieved record-breaking state scores on the New York State ELA, math and science assessments and for consecutive years in a row, Mrs. Lopez's class achieved 100% passing on the 4th grade state science tests. Under her leadership and support, the fourth grade team has consistently outperformed fourth graders in the Yonkers Public Schools in ELA, math and science state exams. I am confident that with Mrs. Lopez's

expertise in effective test prep and classroom management, she will be an asset to our teaching team. Join me in congratulating Mrs. Lopez on her well-deserved promotion and wishing her a successful journey in her new career as a new school leader. Welcome Assistant Principal Lopez!

Mrs. Jennifer Spina was also promoted from Title I teacher to *Title I Coordinator*. Having filled in as the Interim Coordinator in Ms. Schmeer's absence this past year, Mrs. Spina is ready to hit the floor running in her new position in September. She will oversee the effective implementation and compliance of Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Mrs. Spina will lead the Title I team in providing the highest level of instructional support services for our at-risk students while also supporting literacy instruction in the new second grade bridge class we are piloting in the fall. Please join me in congratulating Mrs. Spina on her promotion and welcoming her as a new member of CSEE's leadership team!

More good news to share is the promotion of our sixth grade teacher, Ms. Margaret O'Donnell. Ms. O'Donnell has taken on additional responsibilities this coming school year as *Middle School Lead Teacher*. With her successful track record in promoting student achievement and achieving successful state test results, Ms. O'Donnell is an asset with a great deal to offer her colleagues in her new role. Ms. O'Donnell has many accomplishments to be proud of including winning *CSEE's Teacher of the Year Award* in 2009, achieving 100% passing on the 6th grade ELA Assessments and winning the *Laurie Renee Brown Award* for her passion and commitment to students and their education. I look forward to working with Ms. O'Donnell in creating a model middle school program that will serve as an exemplar for others. I wish Ms. O'Donnell success in her new teacher/leader role.



Kudos to this innovative and outstanding team of fine educators. We look forward to more staff members being encouraged to take on leadership roles here at CSEE. What a team!

Stay tuned for more staff updates coming in the fall.

AUGUST ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 22-September 2

Professional Development for Teachers

August 22, 2011

Board of Trustee Meeting

6:00 p.m. in the MPR

**Board meetings are open to the public and parents are encouraged to attend.*

Important School Documents

Enclosed please find important documents that parents must complete and return to the school on the first day of school. If you have more than one child in the school, you must complete and submit a separate form for each child. Please use the helpful checklist on the next page to ensure you are returning all required school documents in September.

Helpful Checklist



- Student Emergency Contact Form** (Please review the **SCHOOL COPY** enclosed and update information **only** if there are changes by completing a NEW Emergency Contact Form)
- Lunch Application (2011-2012)**
- Media Release Form**
- Dietary Restriction Form**
- Neighborhood Walk Consent Form**
- Emergency Text/Email Notification System Form**

Reminder for Students:

- Return completed **Summer Learning Packets** on the first day of school. Summer homework counts and will be graded.

- Report to school in full uniform.
- Start the new school year with a positive attitude and a vision for excellence.

You may visit our website for a list of school supplies for all grade levels, and much more. Continue to check the site periodically for updates on the progress of the middle school and other important notices.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at ccastillo@cseeschool.org or leave a message for me at the school at **914-476-5070**. I will not be available to return phone calls until I return from vacation on August 22.

Enjoy the rest of your summer! I look forward to welcoming our students, staff and families back to school on September 12th.

Sincerely yours,



Catalina Castillo
Principal