



Hillary Casado, Principal (A)  
Kara Levin, Assistant Principal (A)

12 Spruce Street New York, NY 10038  
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www.sprucestreetnyc.org

August 2, 2017

Dear Families,

Greetings from the midpoint of summer vacation! I hope you are each enjoying a combination of travel, rest, and time with loved ones. Most of all, I hope the summer is a joyful, rejuvenating time for you. This summer, my family and I took a road trip to Lake George, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. We spent our days together, hiking and sharing laughs with one another. I am at Spruce for the remainder of the summer and I have had the pleasure of working alongside Valerie, Sarah, and many teachers as we continue to plan towards September.

First, welcome to all new Spruce Street families! This letter is intended for *all* PK-8 parents/guardians. We are all one school community, and it is wonderful to have so many new, enthusiastic families joining our returning families.

We know that childhood is a time of rapid development on all fronts. We are committed to learning about your children and adapting our practices to meet their needs. In anticipation of a wonderfully busy year ahead, we do want to share some information and reminders ahead of September.

### **Staffing and Program Updates**

A school is only as successful as the adults make it. We are so proud of the staff we have built and have wonderful additions this year. We have a few staff members who have chosen to pursue opportunities in different communities across the state and even across the globe. Although it is always sad to see such valuable members of our community move on, we are sure you join us in wishing them well. We are also confident you'll share our enthusiasm in welcoming new members of the Spruce teaching team, and you will learn more about them, directly from them, in the coming months.

Here are important details ahead of the specifics.

- Teachers work to create balanced classes of children. Grade teams think about which children work well together, what each child's academic strengths/needs are, etc. Their task is to create heterogeneous groups of students that would work well as a future class. We then assign teachers to classes as the final step. Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate individual requests regarding class/teacher placement. **Families will receive their Welcome Letter from their child's teacher(s) the week of August 28th.**
- We are an inclusive school, in accordance with federal laws and citywide initiatives to promote inclusivity and a diverse student body. At some point over your child's career at Spruce Street, s/he may very well be in an inclusive, co-taught setting (ICT). We have students who receive a range of push-in and pull-out support services. Research is plentiful that this benefits all children and is not something families can opt in or out of. Families will receive more information about co-teaching and other academic initiatives as the year approaches.
- As we have done in the past, we have maintained continuity as a school by having some teachers change grades. This is not an overall policy of looping, and while some children may have the same teacher for multiple years, no teacher remains with the exact class of children.

Here is a current list of teachers for each grade-level, as well as a brief blurb about any new staff members.



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**Principal, A**

Hillary Casado

**Assistant Principal, A**

Kara Levin

**Parent Coordinator**

Valerie Salitan

**Guidance Counselor**

Sarah Maiolo

**Pre-Kindergarten Teacher**

Christine Rodgers

**Kindergarten Teachers**

Alexander Long (ICT)

Aislinn Kerrigan (ICT)

Alison Hannon

Dan Osborne

**Grade 1 Teachers**

Lindsay Panesar (ICT)

Caroline Harris (ICT)

Rebecca Mitchell

Jennifer Heo

**Grade 2 Teachers**

Katherine Miller (ICT)

Nicole Silverberg (ICT)

Samantha Weng

**Grade 3 Teachers**

Sophia Rock

Joyce Heller (ICT)

Vanessa Verde (ICT)

**Grade 4 Teachers**

Paola Higuera (ICT)

Bari Lenz (ICT)

Katya Haratonik

**Grade 5 Teachers**

Candice Batson

Josephine Hendrix-Hansen (ICT)

John Speedling (ICT)

Stefanie Ericksen (ICT)

**Grade 6/7/8 Teachers**

Nancy Welch – Research 6/7

Suna Pong –Literature 6/7

Trevor Buckley – Math 6/8

Ricky Reid– Math 7/8

Elsa Tippy – Science 6/7/8

Jennifer Aaron - Humanities 8

**MS Learning Specialists**

Kristen Guttormsen

Melissa Levi

Meryl Glicksman

**Physical Education**

Kevin Lundgren

**Science**

Trent Kirkpatrick

**Visual Art**

Sarah Zidonik (PK-3)

Kristin Mees (4-8)

**Music**

Alan Weintraub (PK-5)

Daniel Mauck (6-8)

**Librarian**

Yael Gogolev

**Spanish**

Hernan Serruya



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- **Kara Levin** joins our administrative team as **Acting Assistant Principal**. Kara has been an instructional coach for many years with Metamorphosis in addition to her many years of teaching experience in the NYC DOE.
- **Aislinn Kerrigan** will **co-teach Kindergarten** as a Special Education Teacher with Al. Aislinn (pronounced Ash-lyn) is a recent graduate from NYU.
- **Caroline Harris** will **co-teach in 1st grade** as a Special Education Teacher alongside Lindsay. She and Lindsay were on the 5th grade team together where they commenced their collaboration last spring.
- **Jenny Aaron** joins our MS team as the **8th grade Humanities** teacher. Jenny has spent the past years as a public school teacher in Queens. She has a background in Theater, English, and Women's Studies, all perfect complements to the Humanities work in which she will embark.
- **Meryl Glicksman** returns to the Spruce community after her extended child care leave as **MS Instructional Coach and MS Learning Specialist**. Meryl has taught a range of grades at Spruce in the past and we are thrilled to have her among us again in these new capacities.
- **Josephine Hendrix-Hansen** and **Stefanie Ericksen** will **co-teach 5th grade** with John as a triad (when Stefanie returns from childcare leave) and serve as **Instructional Coaches** in the elementary school grades. Josephine will be the elementary school Literacy Coach and Stefanie will be the elementary school Math Coach.
- **Sarah Zidonik** and **Kristin Mees** join Spruce as our **Art teachers**. Sarah, has been an art teacher in Brooklyn for many years and co-directs a summer art camp in FL. Sarah has worked on costume and set design, as well as on screen printing and printmaking. She will be teaching PK-3rd grade art. Kristin has been a MS art teacher in D2 for many years. She has been a liaison for the D2 Art Show, has worked with students to create art portfolios, and brings a range of artistic skills with her to Spruce as our 4th-8th grade art teacher.
- **Alan Weintraub** and **Daniel Mauck** join Spruce as our **Music teachers**. Alan is a graduate of Teacher's College and has worked as a music teacher in Brooklyn over the past years. He studied Flamenco guitar in Spain and has had many musical endeavors over the past years. Alan will be our PK-5th grade music teacher. Daniel has worked in D2 elementary and high schools in Manhattan throughout his career. His skills include piano, guitar, choral conducting, and music technology (just to name a few!).



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Our cluster and specialty teacher team continues to grow and evolve. Students will continue to have visual art, music, science, and physical education on a weekly basis. We will also continue to use our school library as an ongoing resource.

We are continuing our partnership with NDI (National Dance Institute) to both complement and supplement our existing curriculum. We are currently considering a chess program and other organizations. We will have more information to share once these pieces are finalized.

### **Opening Day – September 7, 2017**

All students in New York City will return to school on Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.

Please note: Kindergarten students will follow a modified, early release schedule on September 7<sup>th</sup>. We will reach out to K families as September approaches with additional details. Pre-K Families will receive information about their staggered schedule for the opening days of school.

Students in Grades 1-8 will follow a typical school day schedule, meaning their day will run from 8:15 a.m.-2:35 p.m. (these are our standard school hours for the 2017-2018 school year). We will share more details about arrival and dismissal procedures in subsequent communications.

### **A Look Ahead**

Here are some odds and ends.

- All grade teams have requested a common set of supplies from families. Though the online ordering period has ended, check our website for updated supply lists.
- In September, we will launch a series of informational workshops for families, as well as instructional resources posted on our school website. Please save the date for our Curriculum Evening on September 26<sup>th</sup>. A complete flier is forthcoming, but the night will include several important topics:
  - o A session for families in our ICT classes/those interested in hearing more about the IEP process
  - o Classroom sessions to learn more from your child's teacher(s) and specialty teachers
  - o A session on safety procedures and our behavior expectations

Summer is such a special time to rejuvenate and explore your surroundings. I hope this time is proving restful for your family. Along with Valerie, we are around for pieces of the next few weeks if you need anything, so please do reach out with any questions or concerns.

In Learning,

Hillary Casado  
Principal (A), Spruce Street School