Dear Campus School Families:

I write as both a parent and a principal --and with both hats-- I have to tell you, "WOW!" The first week of school carries with it so much anticipation and such a jarring change of pace and schedule. School begins, friendships reacquaint, and all the other assorted commitments in our lives begin anew: music lessons, sports, and more. What a week it has been for me, my family, and all of us at the Campus School community. Now that the last child has been picked up from the portico, I want to convey some details of the week:

First, we have received some feedback from families on the format of the weekly newsletter. Starting next week (9/13), we will send a reformatted newsletter that provides clear and concise information important to your family.

Second, I also wanted to share my impressions of week one. All across the school, teachers and students were engaged in the critical work of developing the routines, rituals, and practices that will define their classroom community for the year. I heard first graders talking about the importance of respecting each other's space, second graders learning about each other and practicing their listening skills, third graders describing how important it is to show gratitude, fourth graders deliberating about the nuances of what it means to be true to themselves and each other, fifth graders talking through what it means to get the details right on classroom jobs and responsibilities, and sixth graders contending with what it means to have a classroom where ideas can be respectfully debated. In short, the work of this week involves students and teachers co-creating a set of values and practices that will guide and define how we spend our time together.

As the principal, I too thought of how I could contribute to this essential work. Our staff and faculty gathered before students arrived and engaged in professional development focused on the guiding words and principles of our community. I also thought about what I wanted to share in our opening assembly. A fourth grader gave me a wonderful suggestion: she said, "share your favorite book." I read an excerpt from Amos and Boris by William Steig, which is a cherished book in my family. It tells the story of a mouse named Amos and a whale named Boris.

Amos designs and builds a beautiful sail boat. He falls overboard into the sea and just when all hope seems to be lost— Boris rescues him and they part. Years hence Boris gets stranded on the beach and is found by Amos. The little mouse finds a way to rescue the whale and the books ends with the two acknowledging each other, "Goodbye, dear friend."

I chose the book because it enabled me to emphasize some themes that I believe define the ethos and spirit of the Campus School. Amos and Boris act with kindness. Each is courageous enough to ask each other for help and, most of all, they convey gratitude. So as we launch this new year, we will strive to remember the wisdom of the mouse and whale: be kind, ask and give help, and show gratitude.

Sincerely,

Sam