



KEEPING AN EYE ON PTI



AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE NEW PROGRAMMING AT CoJDS

FALL 2024

VISITING PRINCIPAL PROGRAM



The iconic picture titled “The Loneliest Job” captured John F. Kennedy from behind, standing alone at his desk in front of the Oval Office windows, with the world’s weight on his shoulders. Often, a leader,

surrounded by so many people vying for his or her attention, truly has no one to speak to, to learn from, or to turn to for a fresh perspective.

School principals engage day-to-day with one school in one community, and the opportunity to step out of this bubble is not readily available. The principal’s ability to learn can be hampered by natural limits on his or her exposure to ideas beyond the four walls of one school. The principal’s problem-solving capacity may be restricted to tired solutions that are not up to the challenge of the moment. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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To address this, the Consortium of Jewish Day Schools has developed a new Principal Visitation program, where principals spend a day or two in another school, observing, sharing, and learning together.

The visiting principal can be a veteran visiting a school with a principal earlier in their career. In other cases, new principals have the opportunity to visit and spend a day with a veteran principal at his home school. Visiting principals see the host school in action, observe classes, meet with teachers and school leaders, and engage with the broader school community, including board members and other lay leaders.

The Principal Visitation program gives the Consortium a window into the challenges and needs of the host schools and their principals while helping the host schools and visiting principals, allowing fresh ideas to germinate and solutions to be shared.

Recently, **Rabbi Avi Pekier** of Torah Day School of Dallas visited **Rabbi Yerachmiel Garfield** in Yeshiva Torat Emet (Houston). Reflecting on the visit, Rabbi Garfield said that principals can “get used to their own reality, so having another set of eyes come, walk around the classes, see the interactions and the people in the school helps us identify areas of strength and possible areas of improvement.” In addition to these observations, Rabbi Pekier had the chance to deliver a message to the *talmidim* and address the *rebbeim* during his visit.

Rabbi Yosef Bondi from Yeshiva Ohr Eliyahu (Los Angeles) traveled to San Diego to spend a day with **Rabbi Benjamin Geiger** at San Diego Hebrew Day School. Rabbi Bondi appreciated how the visit afforded him the opportunity “to gain fresh perspectives on effective educational practices, particularly in the areas of curriculum, classroom management, student engagement, and the overall happiness of the *talmidim* and talmidos.” Rabbi Geiger also found the visit to be helpful, expressing that “hosting Rabbi Bondi offered a unique opportunity for self-reflection and growth. His fresh perspective allowed us to see our curriculum, personnel, and school culture through a new lens, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. The conversations provided valuable insights that reinforced our successes and sparked ideas for further development, enhancing our approach to delivering quality education and fostering a positive school environment.”

Rabbi Shlomo Newman from Yeshiva Bais Yehudah (Detroit) is scheduled to spend a day at Cincinnati Hebrew Day School with **Rabbi Yitzchok Goldstein**. Rabbi Newman values the Consortium’s facilitation of visits because “it connects us with fellow *menahalim* in a structured fashion with the clear goal of collaborating to better both schools with a continued partnership system.”

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RABBI AVI PEKIER
Torah Day School of Dallas



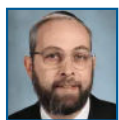
RABBI YOSEF BONDI
Yeshiva Ohr Eliyahu (Los Angeles)



RABBI BENJAMIN GEIGER
San Diego Hebrew Day School



RABBI SHLOMO NEWMAN
Yeshiva Bais Yehudah (Detroit)



RABBI YITZCHOK GOLDSTEIN
Cincinnati Hebrew Day School



RABBI ISAAC ENTIN
Caskey Hebrew Academy (Philadelphia)



RABBI AARON KUTNOWSKI
Torah Day School of Ottawa



RABBI ARYEH KRAVETZ
Toras Chaim (Norfolk)



RABBI ARYEH BIRNHACK
Hasten Hebrew Academy (Indianapolis)



RABBI BINYAMIN LEVIN
Torah Academy of Jacksonville



TALKING CHINUCH: SUPPORTING JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

h a d r a c h a . c h i z u k . c h a v e r s c h a f t .

Since joining the Consortium staff, Rabbi Dovid Engel has undertaken to guide schools and *menahalim* in a variety of hands-on ways. In just a short time, his projects on behalf of *chinuch* institutions and their leaders have made an outsized impact.

Coming up this December will be the second annual *Menahalim Talking Chinuch* conference, where over 75 *menahalim* are expected to gather for *Shabbos* to connect and learn from each other, bringing *chizuk* and fresh ideas back to their schools. These conventions are the outgrowth of the twice-monthly *Menahalim Talking Chinuch Zoom* meetings, when *menahalim* discuss topics related to *chinuch* following an agenda sent to them a few days in advance.

Rabbi Engel's Daily Memo email goes out Sunday through Friday to over 100 *menahalim* and includes tips, advice, stories, and invaluable guidance, setting the tone for quality, professional, and *Torahdik* school leadership. For example, a Daily Memo sent two weeks prior to *Rosh Hashana* advised *menahalim* to remind their *rebbeim* about preparing packets about the upcoming *Yamim Tovim* – and guided them to ask their *rebbeim* to share it with the *menahel* before sending it home. The memo also provided recommendations about holding a *kapparos* event in school and a *simchas bais hashoeva* on *Chol Hamoed Sukkos*, when appropriate.

In addition, Rabbi Engel spends time on the road, visiting schools to meet with principals, observe *rebbeim*,

and share ideas. Rabbi Engel recently presented at the schoolwide professional development day in Torah Prep School of St. Louis. Mrs. Racheli Staum, the school's *menahel*, said, "My teachers gained so much from Rabbi Engel's visit. He presented many practical ideas in an engaging and clear way and the teachers walked away with many tools that they can implement right away." Rabbi Yossi Golombeck, *menahel*, reflected, "Rabbi Engel's down-to-earth style made him very enjoyable to listen to and his presentation offered many practical ideas and strategies for the staff to utilize in their classrooms."

Schools can partner with the Consortium to have an ongoing relationship with Rabbi Engel, including regular visits, formal assessments, and the development of improvement plans. Part of Rabbi Engel's effort includes mentoring new principals and mentoring *rebbeim* who are looking to move into leadership positions. Besides supporting *menahalim*, Rabbi Engel runs the *Rebbeim Talking Chinuch* program, leading question-and-answer sessions on *Motzaei Shabbos* throughout the year.

Whether he is at an in-person school visit or on a video conference, working with a *menahel* or a *rebbei*, doing strategic planning or crisis management, the mission of the Consortium of Jewish Day Schools – empowerment, development, and improvement of Jewish day schools across North America, promoting best practices and using traditional *Torah* values – is supported by Rabbi Engel's work.



Rabbi Dovid Engel, *Menahel* of MTC and RTC, was a *rebbe* and a *menahel* for many years, most recently the *menahel* of The Toronto Cheder.

FOSTERING CONNECTION WITH UNITY: CONSORTIUM INITIATIVES IN BERGEN COUNTY

This fall, CoJDS partnered with schools in Bergen County to address the challenge of childhood anxiety. In a whirlwind day-and-a-half of learning, parents, rabbonim, and school mental health staff came together for learning events, including high-quality professional development for over 750 faculty members, and meaningful programming for hundreds of parents.

Perhaps most significant is that the event was in coordination with the local schools: Ben Porat Yosef, Chabad of Tenafly, Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey, The Moriah School, Yavneh Academy of New Jersey, Yeshivat He'Atid, Yeshivat Noam, Yeshivat Shalsholet, and Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey.

Like the Consortium's program on October 7th, which was developed in collaboration with Bergen County schools and Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger, this event represents a new strategy for enhancing schools through community-focused programming and initiatives. By facilitating resource sharing and fostering community, CoJDS can tailor their services to meet the unique needs of a community.

Additionally, the community-wide strategy involves *rabbonim* and community leaders in the initiative, fostering collaboration that extends beyond the schools. This holistic approach to chinuch engages community members of all ages and has the potential to bridge gaps that exist between formal Jewish education and the experience of Jewish adults in our communities.

Rabbi Jonathan Knapp, Yavneh Academy's Head of School, shared his optimism about the initiative. "In their short time working with the *yeshiva* day schools in Bergen County, CoJDS has already made a significant impact. It is our hope and expectation that these efforts will further strengthen our day school community and lead to further efforts of collaboration."

Looking ahead, CoJDS's new Bergen County branch is working with local schools in Bergen County on other projects, including an Israel Clubs program and other projects that have community-wide appeal and support. Rabbi Yehoshua Yeamans, director of development at CoJDS, said, "This is just scratching the surface of what we plan to do as a community. I'm excited to see where this collaboration of all Bergen County schools is headed."

“In their short time working with the *yeshiva* day schools in Bergen County, CoJDS has already made a significant impact. It is our hope and expectation that these efforts will further strengthen our day school community and lead to further efforts of collaboration.”

Rabbi Jonathan Knapp, *Head of School, Yavneh Academy*

The War in Israel A Forever Impact

This fall, as the first anniversary of the October 7th *Simchas Torah* tragedy approached, schools were looking for a way to commemorate the day in a way that was meaningful and would provide important chinuch about this tragedy and the year that followed to their students in an age-appropriate manner.

Working together with eight schools in Bergen County, CoJDS produced a video presentation and accompanying materials for middle school students that met this challenge. The video featured eight students in conversation with **Rav Yaakov Neuberger** discussing the questions they and children like them around the country have on topics such as why there is antisemitism, why *Hashem* makes us suffer, how our *tefilos* can help, and how to maintain the strength to continue with our day-to-day lives during this ongoing situation.

The questions, genuine and expressed with maturity beyond their years, and Rabbi Neuberger's answers,

thoughtful and filled with understanding, helped frame October 7th, *Simchas Torah* and the year that has passed since that day in a way that children and teens needed to hear. In addition to the Bergen County schools that collaborated on this project, the video was shown in 120 schools nationwide.

CoJDS is uniquely positioned to coordinate education for many schools in a community and beyond, with resources and programming that enrich and inspire, always with an eye on high-quality production and educational value. **Rabbi Zach Swigard**, principal at Yeshivat Yavneh in Los Angeles, used the materials in his school's October 7th programming and reflected, "The video was very professional and age-appropriate, and the resources and workbook were a very pleasant addition." **Rabbi Tomer Ronen**, head of school at

Yeshivat He'Atid said, "The video and all the materials are exceptional - *kol hakavod!*"

**October 7th
A Forever Impact**
VIDEO PROGRAM FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
A Roundtable Q&A of Middle School Students
with **Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger**

REAL KIDS WITH REAL THOUGHTS

How can I balance feeling for my Israeli brothers in pain – and going about my own life?

In the beginning, I davened so much, but how can I keep those feelings fresh now?

I'm not there. It's not my life. How can I care more?

Why does it feel like all of the news is gloom and doom lately? Isn't it enough already?

I've tried to do more mitzvot since October 7th, but things keep getting worse... is it helping?

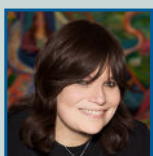
Hashem is good... and does good... but this?

Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Program/Mazer School of Talmudic Studies of Yeshiva University
Rabbi, Congregation Beth Abraham, Bergenfield, NJ

“The video was very professional and age-appropriate, and the resources and workbook were a very pleasant addition.”

Rabbi Zach Swigard, *Principal, Yeshivat Yavneh, Los Angeles*

SENIOR PRINCIPAL CONSULTING



Back home after several days on the road visiting a school, **Mrs. Miriam Gettinger** described with excitement her role as a senior principal consultant for the Consortium of Jewish Day Schools.

“Our goal is to bring schools beyond crisis management to a stance of strategic planning and organizational improvement.”

Mrs. Gettinger retired last summer after four decades as a Jewish day school principal in South Bend and Indianapolis. Over the last 25 years, she has visited schools across the United States and Canada as a consultant, covering the diverse spectrum of Jewish education, from community schools where many of the students are not *Shomer Shabbos* to schools in the *Bais Yaakov* tradition, including boys’ schools, girls’ schools, and co-ed schools, ranging from early childhood to high school.

A visiting senior principal can get a 360-degree view of the school, not only from the perspective of the principal or the teacher, but also from the vantage point of lay leadership and parents, and most importantly, from the perspective of the student. On one recent school visit, Mrs. Gettinger observed a wonderful culture of *simchas hachaim* and effective use of technology in instruction, and she spent time seeing what it’s like to be a middle school boy in the Jewish day school nowadays, especially as it relates to the disparity of experience between the *limudei kodesh* and the general studies. “My visit underscored the need for engagement with parents, who set the tone for their children, to understand a general studies curriculum that has value beyond the academic content. What parent doesn’t want their son to learn to be a mensch and develop communication and problem-solving skills?”

Rabbi Heshy Glass, chairman of the Consortium, envisions Mrs. Gettinger’s efforts to complement what Rabbi Dovid Engel has been building with his *menahalim* programming and support, with outreach to *menahalos* and girls’ schools. The senior principal consultant helps a school leader center those important but not urgent priorities, such as school culture, curriculum and professional development, and student-centeredness, helping to empower, develop, and improve Jewish day schools across North America.

MENAHALOS TALKING CHINUCH

SUPPORTING FEMALE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Building on the success of the *Menahalim Talking Chinuch* program, the Consortium has embarked upon a “sister program” for women in leadership positions in Jewish education. *Menahalos Talking Chinuch* was launched this fall, under the leadership of **Dr. Ahuvah Heyman**, school director of Bnos Yisroel in Baltimore.

The group of *menahalos* includes principals, assistant principals, heads of school, leaders of girls’ schools as well as boys’ schools, and runs the gamut from pre-school through high school. As the Consortium looks to support female school leadership, MTC provides a place to connect and have candid conversations, sharing learning and ideas. Mrs. Heyman explained that “leadership is sometimes lonely, particularly in very big or very small schools,” so providing this kind of forum can give school leaders the clarity and

strength they need to provide high-level *chinuch* in their schools and communities.

The first monthly virtual meeting was held after *Sukkos*. In advance of the meeting, Mrs. Heyman focused the conversation by asking everyone to consider their response to a question she shared. Mrs. Heyman explained that questions women have are different than the ones that their male peers ask. Participants found the tone of the meeting to be safe, meaningful, and personal.

In addition to the monthly meetings, there are plans for an MTC WhatsApp group and a *Shabbaton* as well. Mrs. Heyman stresses that “everyone is welcome” in the group and is excited about how this initiative stands to help further develop female educational leaders.



MENAHALOS TALKING CHINUCH

EVENING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



with **Dr. Ahuvah Heyman**



- Explore topics relating to your professional practice
- Join roundtable discussions and gain new perspectives
- Connect with colleagues and expand your network
- Share your expertise and identify new resources

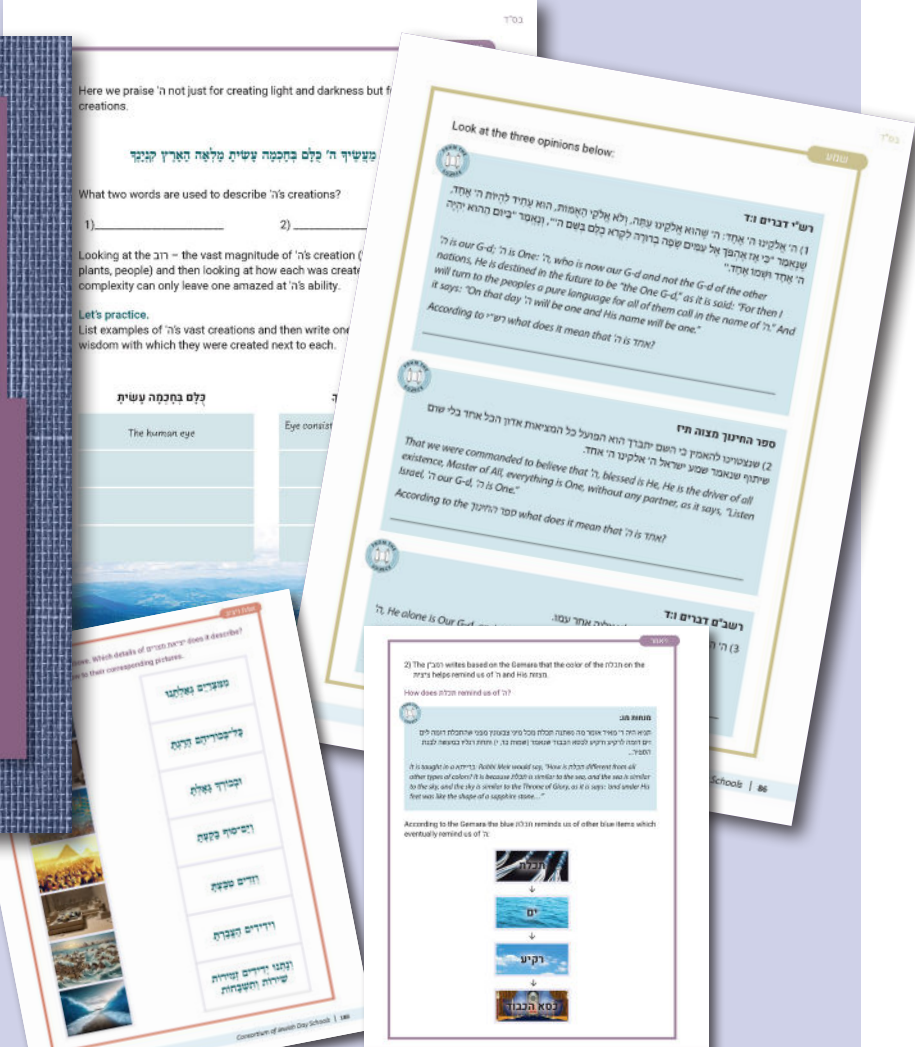
Dr. Ahuvah Heyman has spent the last 25 years helping to grow Bnos Yisroel of Baltimore from 90 preschool students to 540 students in Preschool, Elementary, Middle School and High School divisions as “one school” in one building. With a doctorate in Educational Leadership and a passion for maximizing the potential of each staff member, Dr. Heyman sees challenges as opportunities and empowers her staff to consistently do things better. As the mother of five girls and five boys, she has so far only convinced two of her daughters to become teachers!




לעבדו בכל לבבכם
DAVENING WITH DEPTH

קריאת שמע וברכותיה

STUDENT WORKBOOK קריאת שמע \$17.00
TEACHER EDITION קריאת שמע \$20.00



The goal of a yeshiva day school education is to inspire our students to live a life connected to תורה, מצוות, and Hashem. A major component of that is to encourage students to daven in a meaningful way. If we want our students to love the opportunity that they have to speak to Hashem, we need to help them understand what they are doing.

The Davening with Depth series was developed with this goal in mind. This engaging and interactive curriculum of קריאת שמע וברכותיה is designed to personalize this daily תפילה, shifting students' recitation from robotic to robust. This dynamic guide strives to deepen the students' understanding of content while increasing their engagement with the text through reflective practice, thought provoking questions, and inspiring stories. Geared to a diverse student population, this curriculum provides educators and students with a range of tools to make this מצווה meaningful and purposeful.

DAVENING WITH DEPTH

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JSAT 5

JUDAIC STUDIES ACHIEVEMENT TEST

JSAT LEVEL 5 HEBREW LANGUAGE (שפה)

JSAT Level 5 Stand-alone Hebrew Exam Overview

- *Developed by:* Ms. Tammy Masar, North Shore Hebrew Academy, in collaboration with Middle School Hebrew Language Specialists
- *Exam Content:*
Listening Comprehension | Reading Comprehension | Hebrew Grammar
- *Format:* 40 multiple-choice questions featuring two levels of difficulty to accommodate both emerging and advanced learners
- *Purpose:* Distinguish student proficiency levels to support targeted learning paths

Elevate Hebrew Language Mastery with Precision and Insight!

MENAHALIM TALKING CHINUCH SHABBOS



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that transcend
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שבת פרשת ויצא

Thursday, December 5 – Sunday, December 8, 2024

— Exclusively for Menahalim —

SPEAKERS:

HaRav Chaim Mintz
HaRav Heshy Rubanowitz
Rabbi Heshy Glass
Rabbi Shimon Russell
Rabbi Dovid Engel

MTC

- Daily Memo from Rabbi Engel
- Bi-monthly MTC Zoom chinuch discussions
- Divrei Chizuk from Roshei Yeshiva and mechanchim
- In-person get togethers
- Hadracha in chinuch/school visits
- Personable environment
- Excellent chaverschaft

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST YEAR'S MTC SHABBOS

Keynote address by Mashgiach, HaRav Noach Orlowek | Chinuch Approach: Plan A vs. Plan B
Launch of Rabbeim Talking Chinuch | A Chizuk in the Chavershaft between Menahalim

“The concept of a Menahalim retreat gave a lot of needed chizuk for the “lonely” Menahel. The “farbrenging” with like-minded people was heartwarming and meaningful. Many practical ideas came up from the drashos and discussions. I returned to yeshiva invigorated with a sense of fulfillment!”

— Attendee of MTC Shabbos 5784

For more information, please email cengel@cojds.org

Thanks to a generous sponsor, this event is free of charge for principals and their spouses.



CoJDS is pleased to offer monthly opportunities to connect with your peers 

MENAHALIM TALKING CHINUCH

Tuesday, December 24, 2024
9:30PM EST

REBBEIM TALKING CHINUCH

Motzei Shabbos, December 14, 2024
9:30PM EST



with **Rabbi Dovid Engel**

MENAHALOS TALKING CHINUCH

EVENING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
with **Dr. Ahuvah Heyman**



Tuesday, December 24, 2024
8:00PM EST

The Support Suite:
School-Based Mental Health Professionals



with **Dr. Eli Shapiro**

Wednesday, December 18, 2024
3:00PM EST

Principal Podium:
General Studies



A COUNCIL FOR GENERAL STUDIES PRINCIPALS



with **Brittney Friedman**

Wednesday, December 11, 2024
8:00PM EST

- Explore topics relating to your professional practice
- Join roundtable discussions and gain new perspectives
- Connect with colleagues and expand your network
- Share your expertise and identify new resources

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Rabbi Isaac Entin hosted five principals for a day at Caskey Hebrew Academy (Philadelphia): **Rabbi Aaron Kutnowski** from Torah Day School of Ottawa, **Rabbi Aryeh Kravetz** from Toras Chaim (Norfolk), **Rabbi Aryeh Birnhack** from Hasten Hebrew Academy (Indianapolis), **Rabbi Binyamin Levin** from Torah Academy of Jacksonville, and **Rabbi Geiger** from Soille San Diego Hebrew Day School. *(Pictured on the first page, Rabbi Entin and the visiting menahalim are meeting with Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky.)*

Principals engaging in cross-school visits is a valuable practice that fosters professional growth and collaboration in the Jewish day school community. Rabbi Bondi highlighted the fact that a “visit can foster a sense of community and collaboration between *ye-shivos*, creating opportunities for joint initiatives and sharing resources that benefit both.” The Principal Visitation initiative seeks to foster this growth and collaboration as we continue to support Jewish day schools across the country and the world.



Bergen County day school leaders with Rabbi Glass and Rabbi Yeamans

New York Office

810 Seventh Avenue, 28th floor
New York, NY 10019
www.cojds.org

Cedarhurst Office

395 Pearsall Avenue
Cedarhurst, NY 11516
516.368.3333