



MAURICE RALPH JULIS משה רפאל  
PRINCIPAL TRAINING INSTITUTE



# Keeping an Eye on PTI

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Rabbi Yaakov Sadigh

HEAD OF SCHOOL

HEBREW ACADEMY OF NASSAU COUNTY, WEST HEMPSTEAD, NY



## CREATING MAGIC IN YOUR SCHOOL

Rabbi Yaakov Sadigh is an educator whose name has become familiar to Consortium members during the last few months. He wowed principals with his Creating “Magic” in Your School presentation at the 2019 CoJDS Think Tank, offered a compelling session on creating an action plan to PTI cohort members during their Fall 2019 semester, and enhanced the August 2019 Journal of Jewish Day School Leadership with an article entitled, *Is Your School the Happiest Place on Earth?* The avid interest in his message comes as no surprise to those who have known Rabbi Sadigh for years and have seen the implementation of his vision at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County-West Hempstead Campuses (HANC) where he serves as Head of School. Together with Mrs. Barbara Deutsch, HANC’s Associate Principal, and Rabbi Michael Merrill, the Assistant Principal of the Judaic Studies Department, Rabbi Sadigh has created an environment at HANC where both students and staff can thrive.

Rabbi Sadigh joined HANC eight years ago and was charged with growing the school and creating a school vision. He sought to create a culture that reflected the simple values combined with the rich emphasis on education found in the welcoming West Hempstead community to which the school belongs. Additionally, Rabbi Sadigh had always been intrigued by best practices that he experienced on a trip to Disneyland, and started attending seminars at the Walt Disney Company in order to learn The Business Behind the Magic. He wanted to ascertain whether it was possible to use their proven model to create an educational vision. As Rabbi Sadigh emerged from his journey, it was clear to him that the core values of attention to details, investing in your staff, and effective communication are ones that would help students, parents, and educators thrive in a school setting. It was this vision that he set out to develop at HANC.

In order to begin building an improved culture, Rabbi Sadigh zeroed in on what he believes is the most important asset to any organization – its people. He spent some time observing the school’s staff to make sure that each

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
PAGE 3

FROM THE DESK OF RABBI SADIGH  
PAGE 4

FEEDBACK  
PAGE 4

individual was utilizing his strengths, expertise, and desires for maximum output. Often it was simply a matter of shifting a staff member's role at the school to make sure there was a proper fit. As Rabbi Sadigh saw it, the best catcher is of no use at second base. This gradual restructuring resulted in a greater sense of collaboration and cohesiveness. At this point, Rabbi Sadigh developed what he terms a "common cause" which guides every decision that is made for a student, grade or school wide level. Rabbi Sadigh and his staff's aim is simple: provide an amazing educational experience for his students and their families.

One of the ways that Rabbi Sadigh achieves this goal is through attention to detail and by not ignoring the little things. In fact, he is wont to say, "Great leadership is a million little things." This manifests itself throughout the school in a myriad of ways. Phone calls and emails from parents are returned promptly, and staff is trained to understand that parents are looking to the school for guidance because they want to learn and partner with the school to create the best environment for their children. Rabbi Sadigh greets each child by name every morning and takes the time to learn about each student – what sports teams make his day or what extracurricular activities are the highlight of her week. This results in great customer service that is responded to by students and parents in kind, thereby creating a bridge of trust.

"The nucleus of a school is its staff," explains Rabbi Sadigh. Each new hire that is brought in is armed with the mission of connecting to the students and building a rapport with the children and their families. Rabbi Sadigh is cognizant of the fact that in order for a teacher to be a proper fit for a school that places an emphasis on customer service, that teacher not only has to be trained to enhance a student's educational experience, but has to also have a strong desire to give each child a great experience in a Jewish day school. He often shares a line from the movie *Miracle on Ice* that chronicles the true story of the victory of the U.S. Hockey team in the 1980 Olympics. While in the process of choosing a winning team, assistant coach Craig Patrick asks head coach Herb Brooks why he overlooked the best players on the team. Herb explains, "I'm not looking for the best players, Craig, I'm looking for the right ones." In this same

manner Rabbi Sadigh has surrounded himself with a staff that embraces his "Creating the Magic" vision and helps set the proper scene in their classrooms. Seating arrangements, student work displays, and classroom organization are all designed to facilitate an environment where students are valued as customers and encouraged to succeed. Similarly, many different modalities are used to help each child and allow his or her various talents to shine.

Behavior management at HANC is also designed with Rabbi Sadigh's vision in mind. He explains that in the same manner that a *Chumash* or mathematics lesson can be broken down and taught to a struggling child, a student can be educated in proper behavior as well. Moreover, just as a child is not punished for failing to understand a scientific concept, a lack of proper behavior should not be penalized but rather corrected and coached. Recently, with thanks to CoJDS, Rabbi Sadigh has introduced Larry Thompson and his Responsibility Centered Discipline program to HANC, and this has formalized his discipline approach into an action plan that is used throughout the school.

During the eight years that Rabbi Sadigh has been at HANC there has been a tremendous growth not only in the quality of the educational experience at the school, but also in the number of students wanting to benefit from such an institution. For this reason the school is in middle of a significant capital campaign to meet the increased demand. At the end of the day, the anecdotal evidence that Rabbi Sadigh has shared during his CoJDS presentations and while giving advice to other principals nationwide speaks for itself. A telling story: One day Rabbi Sadigh noticed a fourth grade student in the school office who was wearing a coat and knapsack and was being cajoled by his mother into action. Rabbi Sadigh approached them and tried to work his magic while assuming the boy needed some encouragement to get into his classroom that particular morning. The frustrated mom explained to Rabbi Sadigh that he understood it all wrong. This young boy's strep test had come in positive overnight, and she came to school hoping to pick him up early. The fourth grader was crying because he didn't want to leave school! There is nothing like the magic of a great educational experience. ♦

**"Great leadership is a million little things."**

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Many know Rabbi Sadigh as the Head of School at HANC West Hempstead Campuses and the former Assistant Principal of Yeshiva of Central Queens, and he has served in both these positions with much success. It is his lesser-known years as a high school and fifth grade *Rebbi*, though, that have taught him many lessons that have served him well throughout his educational career. He emotionally recalls a fifth grade student that he taught many years ago. She was having trouble following in class and Rabbi Sadigh spent many weeks using different modalities to discover which learning style was best for her. The results of his efforts, however, were unfruitful. One day Rabbi Sadigh discovered by chance a sketchbook in which he found drawings that this girl had made of every lesson that he had taught. His efforts had been rewarded in a most beautiful way...This story could have ended here with Rabbi Sadigh emotionally appreciative that his student was processing what was going on in the classroom. However, Rabbi Sadigh wanted to set her up for success in other situations as well. He called this student over and expressed admiration for her obvious talent. He asked her if she could do him a favor. Perhaps after each class she could write a few lines explaining what each sketch represented? Rabbi Sadigh's desire to see each student as a whole was successful in his fifth grade classroom and is a mantra that he carries with him until today.

Rabbi Sadigh immigrated to the United States from Iran when he was 10 years old and was introduced to *Torah* learning during his teenage years.

(FUN FACT: His father grew up in Hamadan, a province of Iran, which is more familiar to the reader as *Shushan Habirah*.) He credits much of his growth to his years at Ezra Academy in Queens under the direction of Rabbi Eli Freilich. In fact, his first formal instructional experience was that of a tenth grade *Rebbi* at Ezra Academy. He returned to the school at the behest of Rabbi Freilich who thought the young Shor Yoshuv *bachur* would excel at teaching in the school where he so identified with the impressionable students. The mentoring that Rabbi Sadigh received in his new role from his own *Rebbeim* shaped his educational outlook. Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, a *Rebbi* at Ezra Academy in those days, had a profound influence on Rabbi Sadigh. With simplicity and honesty Rabbi Weinberger was able to share his own journey in Judaism and his love for *Torah*, thereby imparting to a young Rabbi Sadigh the beauty of Judaism and a desire to give it over to others.

Rabbi Sadigh went on to obtain his Master's degree in Education and Special Education from Touro College and received *Semicha* from Yeshiva Nechamat Yerushalayim. He also holds a master's degree in School Building Leadership from St. John's University. As a lifelong learner, Rabbi Sadigh often seizes opportunities to attend further training sessions to develop the specific flavor of his educational framework. He holds certificates of participation from the Disney Institute, Torah Umesorah's National Fellowship for *Menahalim*, and the Harvard School of Education Principals' Center. ♦



## FROM THE DESK OF **RABBI YAAKOV SADIGH**

Consortium of Jewish Day Schools has been a true partner in leading the way to best practices for students, teachers and school leaders in the Jewish day school community. For the last several years, HANC has benefitted from the multitude of workshops, curricula, publications and other resources

which are readily available to us. Under the leadership and guidance of Rabbi Dr. Heshy Glass, the Consortium, in a very short time, has become the clearinghouse for the needs of the Jewish educational world. ♦

### **FEEDBACK:**

**"I love the learning environment that Rabbi Sadigh has created in this school. I love how I feel free to teach ideas and concepts to students in creative ways through hands-on learning experiences and using different technologies. I always feel supported by the administration and I love that I feel noticed for my hard work. I love how our school is all about the children and creating positive learning experiences for them. It is an amazing place to work."**

**—MINDY LEHMANN, HANC TEACHER**

**"HANC is a great school to work in! Rabbi Sadigh has created a collaborative environment where teachers feel appreciated and validated. Rabbi Sadigh has an open door policy. He is always available to discuss new ideas or to talk about any students. Rabbi Sadigh has instilled in his staff the importance of developing and establishing strong relationships with students and the effect that it has on creating a positive classroom environment. Rabbi Sadigh is a true mentor and it is a pleasure working with him!"**

**—MICHAL WASSER, HANC TEACHER**



# WINTER 2019-20 SEMESTER

Dinner 6:30PM | Workshop 7:00PM-9:00PM

**RICHARD ALTABE**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2019**

CoJDs Cedarhurst Office  
395 Pearsall Avenue

## Creating and Maintaining a Vision for Your School



Mr. Richard Altabe, Principal of the Lower Division of the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, has 28 years of experience as a principal in various yeshivot including Yeshivat Shaare Torah, Magen David Yeshivah High School and Yeshiva Darchei Torah. Before beginning his administrative career, he was a classroom teacher in both the NYC Public Schools and Yeshiva of Flatbush High School. He served as a mentor for aspiring yeshiva administrators through the Lookstein Center at Bar-Ilan University and through Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Education. He has been called upon as a consultant for various yeshivot and day schools throughout the United States and Mexico City. In community roles he was a former elected NYC School Board Member, District 27 Queens, Chair of the Special Education Advisory Council for Agudath Israel of America, and is current President of the High School Principal's Council for the Board of Jewish Education as well as President of the Jewish Community Council of the Rockaway Peninsula. He is the current Vice President of CAHAL and a Founder and current Executive Vice President of the TOVA mentoring program in the Five Towns, serving at-risk teens in all yeshivot in the 5 Towns and Far Rockaway.

**SOL HESS**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020**

CoJDs Cedarhurst Office  
395 Pearsall Avenue

## We're In This Together: Achieving Success Through Empathy and Effective Communication



**This session focuses on understanding the value of others and learning how to communicate most effectively to achieve individual and collective success. The workshop, both informative and interactive, highlights emotional intelligence and empathy in the workplace, achieving clarity of tasks and goals, and managing effective and impactful conversations.**

Solomon (Solly) Hess is a professional development coach, motivational speaker, and facilitator of experiential workshops designed to teach empathy in the workplace and develop effective communication tools, and is the founder and director of SOLTALKS professional development services. Incorporating his years of experience in the non-profit, healthcare, and private sectors, Solomon works with teams and individuals to foster their own strengths while stressing the value of others. Whether through impactful storytelling or his unique, interactive exercises, participants are given practical tools for learning and growth and gain a strong understanding the 3 C's of Success: Communication, Compassion, and Community.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9-MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020**

**Come Join Us at Our Annual Winter Retreat in Florida**

South Florida Jewish Academy  
3700 Coconut Creek Pkwy, Coconut Creek, FL 33066

**ASHLEY CHARNOFF**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

CoJDs Cedarhurst Office  
395 Pearsall Avenue

## Looking at Curriculum Critically



**This workshop will explore how we can evaluate curricula from the lens of the various stakeholders: students, teachers, schools, community, state, and country. As we consider the needs of these constituents, we will look at the organization, appropriateness, rigor and structure of a curriculum using Danielson's framework, the Hess matrix and Bloom's taxonomy. We will also discuss our responsibility as educators in making the curriculum a "good fit" for our institution.**

Mrs. Ashley Charnoff has worked in the field of Jewish education for nearly two decades serving in various capacities from classroom teacher to school administrator. She currently serves as the curriculum coordinator for general studies at the Torah Academy for Girls Elementary School in Far Rockaway, NY, and as a math consultant for the early childhood division at the Shulamith School for Girls of Long Island. Her training as a Jewish New Teacher Project (JNTP) mentor has enabled her to found and facilitate a new faculty induction program. She has a diverse educational background, having earned a BA from Columbia University, a JD from NYU School of Law, and a Masters Degree in Early Childhood and Special Education from Touro College. Additionally, she was a participant in the ELAI program in educational leadership from Bar Ilan University. Ashley has given workshops on Differentiated Instruction, Integrating Curriculum for Maximum Impact, Having Daily Math Conversations, and various other topics.



INVITE YOU TO THE

# SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Unlocking  
Students'  
Potential

Sunday and Monday  
February 9-10, 2020



Join us at  
**South Florida Jewish Academy**  
**3700 Coconut Creek Pkwy**  
**Coconut Creek, Florida 33066**

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9 10AM-4PM

**Formative Five and School Culture**  
with **Dr. Thomas Hoerr, Ph.D.**

**Building Relationships that Improve  
Student Academics and Behavior**  
with **Rabbi Yaakov Sadigh**

PLUS SPECIAL COJDS SUMMIT WITH SESSIONS ON:

- L'havin U'lehaskil
- Kriah
- JSAT
- and more...

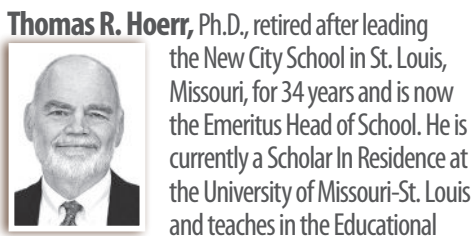
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10 8AM-4PM

**Cutting Edge Strategies to Improve  
Executive Functioning in the Classroom**

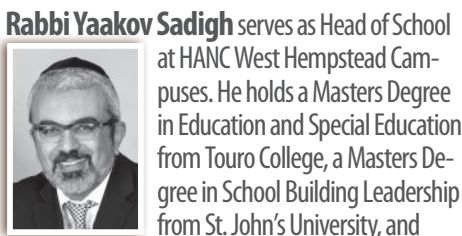
with KEYNOTE SPEAKER **Sarah Ward, MS**

SESSIONS WITH:

- Yakira Begun
- Ashley Charnoff
- Rabbi Dr. Naftali Hoff
- Brachi Kresh
- Dr. Dianne Patterson
- Rabbi Ahron Rosenthal
- Rabbi Dr. Yisroel Rothwachs
- Julie Skolnick
- Michelle Steinhart
- Becky Udman



**Thomas R. Hoerr, Ph.D.**, retired after leading the New City School in St. Louis, Missouri, for 34 years and is now the Emeritus Head of School. He is currently a Scholar In Residence at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and teaches in the Educational Leadership program, preparing prospective principals. He also leads the ISACS New Heads Network, helping new leaders of independent schools. Hoerr has written five books — most recently, *The Formative Five* (2016).



**Rabbi Yaakov Sadigh** serves as Head of School at HANC West Hempstead Campuses. He holds a Masters Degree in Education and Special Education from Touro College, a Masters Degree in School Building Leadership from St. John's University, and Rabbinic Ordination from Nechamas Yerushalayim. Rabbi Sadigh is invited to lecture and present workshops on a broad range of educational topics including intentional leadership, building a collaborative school culture, and improving student behavior.



**Sarah Ward, M.S.**, CCC/SLP and Co-Director has over 15 years experience in diagnostic evaluations, treatment and case management of children, adolescents and adults with a wide range of developmental and acquired brain based learning difficulties and behavioral problems including: Attention Deficit Disorder, Verbal Learning Disabilities, Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities, Asperger Syndrome, Other Social-Cognitive Learning Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Acquired Brain Injury.

**Pricing:** \$100 each day or \$150 for both days. Discounts for schools sending 5 or more educators. For groups of 5 or more, please contact Batya Jacob at [batyaj@ou.org](mailto:batyaj@ou.org) or 551.404.4447.