Gottesman RTW Academy 2022-2023 School year

Teaching Excellence through Professional Development at GRTWA

GRTWA
Teachers and Staff
Never Stop Learning...

Stay up to date on the professional development that our teachers and staff are pursuing to guarantee the best quality education for our students.

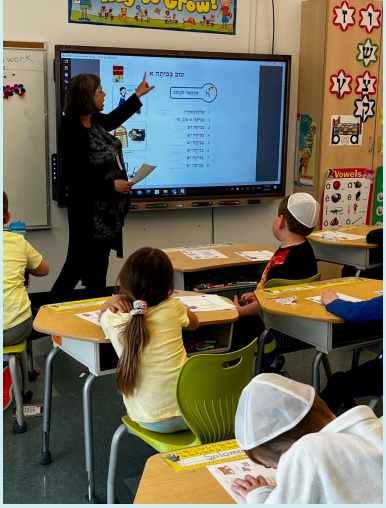
The Value of Professional Development

Gottesman RTW Academy's impassioned effort to foster a love of learning is ingrained in the very fabric of our school community. We believe that in order to inspire our students to be lifelong learners, we must lead by example, surrounding our students with faculty who themselves are encouraged to explore, question, take risks, and create. We support our teachers in their endeavors to be pioneers in education, to be at the forefront of new and exciting classroom practices, and to be perpetual learners who will, in turn, inspire our students to find their own creative paths.

The administration of GRTWA understands that what we invest in our faculty is inherently an investment in our students. Every penny that is spent on providing meaningful professional development opportunities for both teachers and staff directly translates to more engaging, creative, and innovative classroom environments for our students.

The subsequent impact on the student body is both profound and multidimensional. Each time a GRTWA educator explores an exciting new technology or platform and implements it in the classroom, students not only absorb the material at hand, but they also benefit from teaching techniques that tap into different learning modalities.

GRTWA takes great pride in establishing an environment that fosters creativity for both teacher and student alike, and we know our staff feels fortunate to work in a school that recognizes the intrinsic value of professional development.



COLLEGIAL CONVERSATIONS	CONTENT-BASED LEARNING	PERSONALIZATION	EXTENDED LEARNING	TEACHER LEADERSHIP
Affinity Groups/ Visits	Biannual Conference	Individualized Learning Plans	Webinars	Jerry Gottesman Award for Pursuit of Teaching Excellence
Professional Learning Communities	Collaborative Workshops	Teacher Observations	Lunch and Learns	Teacher-led Initiatives
School Visits Within Quest	School Visits Beyond Quest	Pool of Grants for Workshops and Conferences	Additional Follow-up	Mentoring

Spotlight on Rosa Lynch

Academic Excellence Coordinator

Rosa Lynch has been a teacher for 21 years and at GRTWA for 9 years. She currently teaches 5th grade general studies but has also taught 3rd grade math and

social studies and middle school math and social studies. She has been happily married for 21 years and has 2 children: Sarah who is 17 and Shane who is 11.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Rosa is GRTWA's Academic Excellence Coordinator. In this position, she collaborates with our Head of School and Dean of General Studies to research, design, create, and plan professional development opportunities and faculty meetings for all the staff throughout the year. She attends monthly Greater MetroWest Federation meetings with deans from other local day schools and staff from MetroWest where she helps to plan, facilitate, and run the Quest Conference for Teaching Excellence for over 400 teachers from local day schools. In addition, she completes GRTWA's annual census report for Greater MetroWest Federation and manages the school's teaching excellence budget.

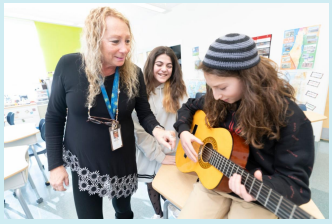
At the beginning of the school year, Rosa meets with each teacher and learning specialist to create an individualized professional development plan (PDP), and after the professional development experience, she meets again with the teacher to record the outcome of that experience. Throughout the year, she informally observes all faculty and uses the data she collects from those observations to design other professional development opportunities for the faculty.

Rosa recently attended the Jerry Gottesman Award Winner's Dinner in New York where the 2019 and 2021 Jerry Gottesman Award winners from all 4 MetroWest day schools were honored. Rosa stated that this experience was an opportunity to hear a brief overview of the professional development work in which the awardees participated and gave her concrete examples of best practices that she will bring back GRTWA.

Quest for Teaching Excellence Breakfast

On March 9, Quest for Teaching Excellence held a breakfast for day school council members and community stakeholders at the Whippany Conference Center. In attendance and representing GRTWA were Dr. Moshe Vaknin, Naomi Bacharach, Rosa Lynch, Erica Arman, Rebekah Lillianthal, Andrew Eitel, and Ziva Soll-Adam.

There were several objectives set out for this gathering: having teachers learn from each other about what they are doing in their classrooms; facilitating meaningful discussions about current issues in education; and a chance to thank the



teachers for the great work they are doing.

Some interesting speeches were given during the morning:

- "Culture of Professional Development Across Disciplines" by Tammy Anagnostis and Gail Shapiro of Golda Och Academy
- "Learning Gaps and Learning Growth" by Rosa Lynch of our own Gottesman RTW Academy
- "Addressing Anti-Semitism with our Students" by Debbie Finkelstein of Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy/Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School
- "Mental Health and Our Schools" by Shira Hammerman of the Jewish Educational Center.

We are looking forward to our upcoming QUEST Conference in Fall 2023!
Cultivating Joy, Skill and Wellness

A centerpiece of The Greater MetroWest Day School Initiative is the Quest for Teaching Excellence, a $1.2 million investment in providing professional development and support to all educators and faculty of the 4 day schools. The Quest is funded by the Paula and Jerry Gottesman Family Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest and the GMW Day School Community Fund of the JCF.

Prizmah Conference
January 2023, Denver Colorado

It was an inspiring three days filled with excellent speakers, engaging workshops, and the opportunity to connect with more than 1,000 colleagues from all over North America and share the amazing work happening in our communities. Dr. Moshe Vaknin, Naomi Bacharach, Alyssa Glaubman, Rosa Lynch, and Liron Kormas-Harpaz attended and the theme of this year's Prizmah Conference was Creative Spirit.

To welcome participants into the dynamic and creative experience, the conference began with workshops facilitated by Creatives-in-Residence and featured presenters. Participants had an opportunity to get into the creative spirit through hands-on explorations of creative processes, artmaking, and facilitated conversations. Some of the creative workshops included the following:

- In the Beginning: A Case for Creativity in Jewish Education with Rabbi Adina Allen from Jewish Studio Project.
- FreeStyle: Jewishly-Inspired Rap and Writing with Chaya Lester from The Shalev Center.
- Moving From Messy to Creativity with Carrie Romero Brugger from MindSpark Learning.
- Creating Space for Openness and Intention with community artist Tova Speter.
- Imagineering: The Art and Science of Creative Thinking with Shuki Taylor from M2.

In addition to these creative experiences, participants had the opportunity to choose from more than 150 sessions throughout the conference designed to develop leadership capacities, share leading practices, foster belonging, and build connections.

The conference culminated with an amazing keynote address with renowned Harvard professor, psychologist, and expert Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar who spoke about the science of happiness and how it can strengthen school communities. Dr. Ben-Shadar will also be the featured keynote speaker at our MetroWest bi-annual Quest for Teaching Excellence Conference 2023.

Jerry Gottesman Award Winners' Trip to NYC

On May 9 through 11, GRTWA teachers Nurit Lev (Award Recipient 2021) and Kate Rubenstein

(Award Recipient 2019) joined other MetroWest award recipients on a trip to New York City. Upon their arrival, they checked into their hotel, had a lovely dinner, and attended *Leopoldstat* at the Longacre Theater.

Throughout the next day, the recipients visited several day schools in the city where they attended workshops and observed classes in various general and Judaic studies subjects. That evening they had dinner with Deans and the Day School Council.

The last day included some time at the Brooklyn Children's Museum and a visit to SAR Academy where they again observed classes before heading back to MetroWest.

Hidden Sparks: Differentiated Instruction Training

In February, GRTWA teachers Janice Rozenwasser, Lori Seigerman, Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen, Rachel Fried, and Raya Benhaim attended Hidden Spark's two-day Differentiated Instruction (DI) training. This workshop offers a deep-dive into DI for Judaic and general studies teachers of grades K-8. Together, colleagues think flexibly about their lessons and the multiple ways in which they can be developed to reach all students, boost engagement, and achieve student success. This training included strategies and facilitated lesson planning sessions so that educators of all levels gained a toolbox of

differentiation strategies that could be applied to their classrooms and tailored to the age group and subject matter they teach.

In addition to the two-day In-person workshop, the participants were divided into groups by grade and subject taught and participated in three additional sessions post-workshop. And our Academic Excellence Coordinator, Rosa Lynch, also attended two virtual sessions to learn ways to ensure that teachers had the proper support and were successful at implementing strategies and ideas.

The Organized Student: Understanding and Cultivating Organization, Time Management, and Planning Skills

GRTWA teachers Jessica Grader, Rosa Lynch, Stefanie Ackerman, and Selena Campoine attended a workshop with Dr. Elana G. Spira in which they learned about common difficulties that students experience in learning. The teachers were given executive functions and methods that would help their students develop and strengthen organizational, time-management, and planning skills. The workshop was presented in the format of an informational overview, interactive discussions, and hands-on activities to apply key concepts. Later in the day, day school parents were offered a Zoom session so these concepts could be applied at home as well.

Multisensory Approaches to Learning

On March 15, Rachel Meiner, Elisa Berger, Jaime Nahan, and Nicole Murphy attended this ECC workshop presented by Dana Blumberg of Positive Step. The workshop, designed for teachers of three- to five-year-olds, covered such topics as sensory systems, teaching phonics and math, and early intervention.

Lunch n' Learns

Lunch n' Learns are training sessions and presentations that take place during lunch periods for all teachers and support staff. Two sessions were presented recently at GRTWA:

- Session 1: Making Students Feel Safe, Seen, and Stretched (March)
- Session 2: Review, Reflect, Reset (May)

Lunch is provided, and teachers and staff from across all disciplines are brought together in an informal atmosphere creating PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to collaborate and learn and to drive personal and team development. This activity is key to creating the success we experience here at Gottesman RTW Academy.

GRTWA staff participated in a variety of professional development opportunities this year including:

Occupational Therapy- Promoting Fine Motor Development & Identifying Sensory Red Flags
Dyslexia in the Religious School Classroom - Gateways: Access to Jewish Education
Eliciting Students' Best Behavior
Responsive Classroom - Bullying prevention
iTalAm
Teaching the Holocaust: Innovative Approaches to the Challenges We Face
Responding to Misbehavior Workshop
Jewish New Teacher Program
Universal Design for Learning
Hidden Sparks: Reading and the Brain
Council for Exceptional Children Spring Conference
Calming the Chaos of Small Groups
It started with a book-STREAM through Literature
Beyond the classroom-Simple STEM projects By. Dr. Yasmin Daniels
Brainpop Connect-Unpacking STEM
Engineering with paper.
STEM con & Beyond
A Decade of Digital Citizenship
Hebrew Language on the Couch Series
World Zionist Organization
Preparing for Veterans Day: Reading Othello at West Point
Hidden Sparks: Social Problem Solving
Taking Assessments to the Next level
Hebrew language Proficiency
Move and Learn
Empowering Students to Build Positive Connections
Unpacking Behaviors - The Brain/Body Connection
How Jewish Milestones Match up With Child Development
Virtual Reality Classroom
Puberty and Adolescent Development: Growing Pains and Gains
Beyond the classroom-Simple STEM projects By. Dr. Yasmin Daniels
Integrated Solutions for PreK-12 SEL
ISTE conference
Carnegie Hall - Link up program (movement workshop)
Empowering Students to Build Positive Connections

Responsive Collaboration for IEP and 504 Teams
When No Gets You Nowhere
How Scaffolding Works
Helping Youth Navigate Their Digital World
Deep Space Sparkle
Social Problem Solving-Teaching a Life Skill
Annual Conference-NJCEC- Embracing the Whole Child: Promoting SEL
The Whole Child Summit-Conversations around Mental Health
Emotional Regulations Skills-The How To's of Effective Validation-Dr. Alec Miller

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