



RABBI AHRON LOPIANSKY
Rosh HaYeshiva

RABBI YITZCHOK MERKIN
Headmaster

MR. LOUIS MAYBERG
President

RABBI ZEV KATZ
Menahel, Girls Division

RABBI DOVID KATZENSTEIN
Menahel, Boys Division

MR. KEVIN ANDERSEN
Director of General Studies,
Curriculum and Instruction

MR. LEON SEEMANN
Chief Operating Officer

MR. DANIEL ELY
Executive Director

Partner Agency of
The Jewish Federation
OF GREATER WASHINGTON



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Dear member of the Greater Washington community:

You may remember that in March of 2013, the Board of Directors of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington-Tiferes Gedaliah (YGW), after community feedback and extensive investigation by a fact-finding committee, put a moratorium on new boarders. Although it was found that many out-of-town students had had a positive impact on the social, academic and spiritual dimensions of our school as well as its financial viability, the Board realized it was necessary to step back and take a hard look at the program and its implementation. At that time it was stated that the Board would consider a new program “only once the development of adequate policies and procedures, including admissions and housing protocols, has been completed.”

After more than two years of research and work, including dozens of meetings by staff, Board members, community members, focus groups and committees, the Board of Directors of YGW approved a **two-year pilot Out-of-Town Student Program (OSP)** to begin in the Fall of 2015. We know that this is a matter with strong feelings on both sides of the conversation. Having spent a great deal of time analyzing and understanding the many concerns, we are confident that the issues were addressed in the design of this new program. While diversity of students is a positive factor that can add to the character of the school when done correctly, ultimately it was a pragmatic decision regarding the long-term financial sustainability of the school which drove the understanding by the Board and staff leadership that the OSP is a key component that needs to be implemented.

As a community school, YGW cannot emphasize more strongly that we will not compromise the quality of our school or the standards as set forth in the new policies for the sake of meeting either enrollment or financial goals.

To that end we would like to highlight some aspects of the new pilot program:

A new **OSP Admissions Policy** has been developed which establishes seven core criteria for the student and their family to be considered for the program. This policy is a component of the new policies, procedures, and the various agreements to be adhered to by the student and their family for acceptance and continued participation in the OSP.

The **Host Family Program** was reconceived to identify local families who are equipped to provide the participating students with stability, guidance and social support in a Torah-observant household in addition to appropriate housing and meal accommodations.

Each division will have an **OSP Manager** and madrichim or madrichos whose tasks will be to interact with the OSP students on a regular basis, identify potential problems, and support the students when they're not in class. This is in addition to our teachers who interact with the students every school day, and, of course, the host families.

The establishment of an **Enrollment Review Committee**, composed of outside designates of the Rabbinic Governance Board (RGB), will oversee the new process for each Menahel-recommended admission to the program.

An **OSP Committee** of the Board of Directors will oversee the program and meet regularly with the staff-leadership of the school.

The **RGB will monitor all incident reports** in order to be aware of egregious or persistent issues, with the full authority to intervene at any time.


In the spirit of transparency all of the policies, procedures, agreements, handbooks, sample application, job descriptions, the Board's final resolution establishing the pilot program and a "Frequently Asked Questions" can be found on the OSP Information page of YGW's website, www.yeshiva.edu.

As an additional component of community partnership, we will be holding a Town Hall meeting Monday, January 12 at 7:00pm at the Girls Campus to answer any questions you may have. If you have any questions before the meeting or are unable to join us, you can email our Communications Manager Rabbi Scott Hillman at shillman@yeshiva.edu.

We want to reiterate that while it has taken over two years to reach this point, we believe that both the process and the resulting frameworks created for the OSP will give us the greatest chance of success. We recognize that there is both an educational and financial value to recruiting students from out-of-town and with Hashem's help we are confident that we will do it right.

We will continue to update you as our process moves forward. Thank you for your interest in the success of YGW as a community institution.


Louis Mayberg
President


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