

YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

ישיבה תיכונית בני

Path To Academic Excellence

an educational learning environment
to develop their unique talents and abilities

commitment to Torah, mitzot, and
ahavat Eretz Yisroel

students with a challenging
reparatory curriculum.

top nationally rated universities and yeshivot

Specialty invited to attend our

IN HOUSE

2006 from 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
venue, Livingston, New Jersey 07039

For more information please call Blanche Eisenstark at
or visit our website at www.rkyhs.org

Chugim • Chugim • College Guidance • Israel Guidance

**aimed . . .
nationally Recognized**

Yeshiva High School for Girls
Building Self-Esteem • Lasting Relationships

The teachers truly care. We feel very special and really enjoy learning at Merkaz.



NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED
SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Merkaz prepared our daughter for a successful future. It was a wonderful experience."

"Merkaz presents a picture of a school completely focused on helping students achieve high academic standards, while developing a strong sense and knowledge base of their Jewish heritage."

U.S. Department
of Education

We love it and are never bored. The extra curricular activities are just terrific."

Join Everyone's Talking About.
Personal Tour or a Videotape,
(718) 259-5600

Merkaz Bnos High School of Greater New York
400 West 6th Street • Brooklyn, NY 11204

Accredited By Middle States Association
of Colleges and Schools

Learning To Teach The Toughest Of Subjects

A new curriculum sponsored by the Jewish Women's Foundation will teach educators to broach topics such as sexuality, abuse and violence with students.

Randi Sherman
Editorial Assistant



Education is empowerment, and the more we teach our children the better — even when it comes to sensitive issues of sexuality, relationships, violence and abuse.

That is the thinking behind "Addressing the Evaded Curriculum in Jewish Education," a program created by Shira D. Epstein, an assistant professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, that is being sponsored by the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York.

"We have the opportunity to model for young people that conversations related to their emotional world belong in a Jewish educational setting and that their lives and experiences outside of the formal educational curriculum are valued and taken seriously," said Epstein.

Epstein's program examines the different ways educators can approach students about sensitive topics such as sex, gender, sexual identity, healthy relationships, abuse and violence. She will spend the next few months

conducting a literature review, determining which texts will best fit the program's discussions and goals. The texts will then be incorporated into introductory modules and tested with a group of 120 pre-professional and professional educators starting in December.

The pilot groups, including student educators from the Davidson School as well as members of the national Day School Leadership Training Institute and the regional Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, a partnership between Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and UJA-Federation of New York, will meet in one- to two-hour sessions to learn how to broach sensitive subjects in the classroom.

"It's all about entry points ... it's not one size fits all for every institution," said Epstein, noting that some educators might choose to use religious texts while others might prefer videos, discussions or young adult fiction to explain prickly issues.

Epstein said that these issues have generally been avoided because "Jewish educators

have not had this in their training, so in some cases it's not even on the radar, or they are at institutions with very structured curricula that have never dealt with it before."

Some educators also feel uncomfortable discussing sensitive issues both because of their nature and because they are worried that their schools would not approve.

"I thought about how we could help [educators] understand their role in the emotional realm," Epstein said. "We want to help Jewish educators be comfortable with the curriculum and explore their

own discomfort" in order to overcome it.

Educators involved in the pilot program will determine which teaching methods are right for their institutions. The program will also explore the unintended messages students may be getting from the textbooks, posters and other materials used by schools.



JTS' Shira Epstein: "We have the opportunity to model for young people that conversations related to their emotional world belong in a Jewish educational setting."

Epstein said that some schools might be sending some dangerous messages through their silence. According to her, a recent study found that even in some institutions where there are rules and regulations in place with regards to sexual harassment, there was never a discussion explaining what constitutes harassment.

Some educators also feel uncomfortable discussing sensitive issues both because of their own and because they are worried that their schools would not approve.

Epstein's proposal won.

"We want to create an environment where the next generation will be healthy, and this program embodies our mission," said Sherri Greenbach, executive director of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York.

Both Epstein and Greenbach are looking forward to the potential this pro-

"If you don't discuss these things with kids, there is no understanding," Epstein said. A lack of understanding can lead to violations of the school's standards and values as well as of students' well being.

An advisory board, comprising content area specialists and recognized Jewish leaders, will meet twice during this pilot year, once in November to determine the steps of the program, and again in the spring to analyze feedback from the test groups.

Last September, the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York called on more than 1,000 organizations to send in concept letters to compete for grant money.

gram has of reaching beyond Conservative lines, to other denominations and to synagogue schools.

"This is a very exciting time to be exploring this work," Epstein said. "The URJ [Union of Reform Judaism] created a teen curriculum for body and sexuality; I just wrote a curriculum for Jewish Women International for young teens about sexuality and relationships. The Foundation for Jewish Camping has done work on body image issue.

"It has now become more a part of the discourse, and the more we continue to make it acceptable to have these conversations, the more it will seep into school culture." ■

TOURO COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

(Evening, Weekday and Sunday Classes)

- Earn a Master of Social Work
- Meet all academic requirements for State L.M.S.W. & L.C.S.W.
- Classes at Main Campus and Graduate Center at (Course selection limited)
- Full two-year 60-credit program with education placement, b



Contact:
Steven Huberman, I
Touro College School of Social Work
43 West 23rd Street,
212 463.0400 ext. 2



WPIA — A Unique School That Has It All

- ▶ 17-acre, state-of-the-art facilities
- ▶ Inspiring, innovative and integrated curriculum that fosters creativity and develops critical thinking skills
- ▶ Welcomes children from all branches of Judaism
- ▶ Warm, nurturing environment for students and their families

STRIKE

Perfect for
Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and
Private Events of
up to 800 people.

Please contact one of our
expert event coordinators
at (516) 354-1222 x316.