

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

“Sometimes
you have to
take a
step back
To see that
you’re moving
forward
in the right
direction.”

FOR THE DIRECTOR

- What has gone well so far? What wins can you (should you) be celebrating? Are you giving yourself enough credit for those?
- How is the new year’s work-family balance falling into place? What tweaks need to be made? What can you delegate to someone else?
- How is the communication between you and staff? On issues related to school? Building personal rapport? (Are you ‘checking in’ or ‘checking up’ on them?)
- How/where are you modeling the school’s values and philosophies?
- Are you letting new issues slide because you can’t be bothered with them just now?
- How is your personal communication between school & families? Have you spoken to each family yet this year?
- What have you done to welcome and support the new teachers?
- Do you get a sense that the teachers trust and respect you? If not, what might you do to change that?
- Do you ask for, encourage and actually implement ideas from your teachers?
- What are you doing to create a fun and healthy work environment for your staff?

“The more
reflective
you are;
The more
effective
you are.”

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

STAFF

Think of each staff member individually:

- Have you had a chance to speak to her about how she is settling in for the year?
- What is something you might do to surprise her – a token of your appreciation and support?
- What is something that is going well in her classroom? How might you express that you notice and appreciate it?
- What additional support might she need?
- What is her preferred Professional Development style? (what is her learnability level?)
- Are you noticing any beginnings of a problem (promptness, organization, teamwork, difference in values or education philosophies)?
- What have you learned from reflecting about her experience this year that you might incorporate for all staff?
- What is her inspiration style; what is most motivating to her? (small gifts, praise, asking her to share her successes)
- What talents/ skills might she be able to share with the rest of the team, or parents?
- What might be going on in her personal life where you can support her, or make some accommodations (ex: scheduling) to help her?

Think of the staff as a team:

- Are the co-teacher partnerships working well?
- Are the veteran and new teachers coalescing as a team? What might you do to foster this even more?
- How do they work together as a team – brainstorming new ideas for projects?
- Are you noticing any beginnings of a problem?

“If your
actions
inspire others
to dream more,
To learn more,
To do more,
become more
then you
are a leader.”

“You don’t
build a
business, you
build people...
And people
build a
business.”

“You can
observe
a lot by
watching.”

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

CHILDREN

Think of each child individually:

- Does the child seem to be integrated into the program appropriately?
- Does the child’s cubby have everything you have requested?
- What seems to be the child’s strengths? Temperament? Challenges?
- What seem to be the child’s favorite activities? What are the child’s interests?
- What is the child’s learning style; how does s/he learn best?
- Where does this child fit in the continuum on specific skills and knowledges (ex: can the child write, knows alphabet, can zip jacket)?
- Are there any routines that seem challenging for the child?
- Does the child seem stimulated enough?
- What did you learn about specific needs of the child? Can you realistically address those? What adjustments need to be made?
- Are you noticing any potential issues? What can you do at this point before they escalate?
- Which other children does the child gravitate to? Is this a healthy arrangement?

The children as a group:

- Are there groups of children that play together often? Do they intentionally exclude other children?
- Are you noticing any potential bullying (or beginnings of bullying)?
- Do children work through social issues on their own?
- Do children turn to each other for help in figuring something out? (To any specific child? For only specific issues?)
- Do children show a sense of responsibility to each other?

“Educate a
child
according to
his way.
Get to know
his way.”

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

“When parents
and teachers
work together,
they are
unstoppable.”

THE FAMILIES

School-Home Communication:

- Is the communication flow sufficient? Is it effective? Are parents absorbing (reading, watching, listening to) what you send? How do you know (analytics, anecdotal, they tell you directly)? Are adjustments needed? What might you do to enhance the communication?
- Are parents acting on what you communicate (school procedures, ‘please send in ...’, ideas for them to do at home)?
- Are any families having a hard time with the school-home communication (language, technology, ‘too busy’, etc.)? What might you do for those families?

Think of each family individually:

- Did they get a personal phone call from the director (in addition to the phone call from the teacher) to talk about how they are settling in?
- Are they getting what they had hoped for when choosing your school (emotions, fears, needs, passions)? How do you know? What can you highlight to them about the school program?
- What have you done to make the family feel valued? What else might you do during the year?
- Are they having a hard time with any of the schedules, protocols, procedures (ex: coming to school on time, picking up on time, providing appropriate snacks, mitzvah notes, tzedakah)? Is there something you can do for that family (without losing the integrity of your school’s principles)?
- Are you noticing any issues in the family (ex: new baby coming, illness in the family, neglect, family discord); how might you be a support to them?

" Don't satisfy
your customers,
figure out how to
absolutely delight
them. That is the
number one
thing no matter
who your
customers are.”
-- jeff bezos

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

“An effective leader manages the program, an ineffective one disciplines.”

THE FAMILY CONTINUED

- Is this family a good candidate for volunteering for school projects, events or PTO?
- Can you possibly ask this family to sponsor a specific event or project?
- Is this family one you can/should invite for Shabbat or Yom Tov?
- Is this family ready for more Yiddishkeit?

Think of the families as a community:

- Are the families beginning to coalesce as a community? What else can you do to enhance this?

THE PROCEDURES / PROTOCOL

Think of all procedures / protocols (especially new ones for this year):

- How is working out in the end? How did you become aware of issues? Any adjustments needed?

THE SPACES

Think of each space individually (classrooms, outdoor spaces, hallways, lobby, pickup/drop off, etc.):

- Is this space working well for the teachers, children and parents? What can enhance the functionality of the spaces?
- Is the space engaging enough for the children?
- Is the space safe for the children?
- Is everything* labeled? (* everything that you had planned to)

“What messages are your spaces sending?”

"The expert in anything was once a beginner."

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

• THE SPACES CONTINUE

- What might the parents or visitors think of the space? (Even if they are appropriate for children, sometimes we have to add a 'something' for the sake of the parents.)
- **Lobby/ entrance space:** What do visitors see/ hear/ smell in this space? What welcoming factors does the space have? Does it reflect what is happening in your school?
- **Pickup/ drop off:** Do parents see your safety protocols in action? Is there a way you might highlight those (signage)? Do parents get a sense of what the child will do/ has done during the day?
- **Outdoor spaces:** Are they engaging enough for the children? What might prospective parents think of the space? What might you add to 'wow' the parents?

FOR NEW TEACHERS

- **What are some wins in these last few weeks? How can I have more like those?**
- **In what ways can my past experiences enhance this school's programs?** What ideas from my past teaching experiences might be worth bringing up to the director or team?
- **What surprised me most about myself in this new role?**
- **How confident am I that I know what is expected of me/ what is the school's definition of success?** What else do I need to know to be even more confident?

"A new job is like a blank book and you are the author."

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

FOR NEW TEACHERS CONTINUED

How confident do I feel that I know this school's procedures and protocols?

Which areas do I need better understanding and support? Who is the right person to bring this up to?

How well do I fit into the team? What else can I do to better coalesce into the team? What do I wish the school or others would do; who is the right person to bring this up to?

What are some examples of where the team supports each other? How comfortable do I feel asking for support; what might I do to feel even more comfortable? What do I wish the school or others would do; who is the right person to bring this up to?

How comfortable do I feel sharing my ideas and insights with the director and team? What might be holding me back; ; what might I do to feel even more comfortable? What do I wish the school or others would do; who is the right person to bring this up to?

" We don't
learn from
experience.
We learn
from
reflecting on
experience."
-- John Dewey

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

DAILY REFLECTIONS

What was a wonderful moment (in or out of the classroom) today? What about it was so wonderful? How can I have more moments like it?

What was a challenging moment (in or out of the classroom) today? What about it was challenging? How will I respond next time?

How was my mood today? What might have triggered that? If I was in a good mood, what might I try to do to continue that mood? If I was in a yukky mood, what might I do to improve it?

How well did I communicate with the others today? What did I learn about myself? What might I do differently in the future?

In what ways did the children surprise and/or delight me today? What might I do to support that in the future?

In what ways did I support my colleagues today; how will I continue to do so?

What did I do today for myself; how does this energize me?

What is something wonderful that I noticed in another classroom? How might I share that with others? How might I incorporate that in my practice?

What ideas do I have to share with the director or colleagues?

“The past is
to be learned
from, not
lived in