

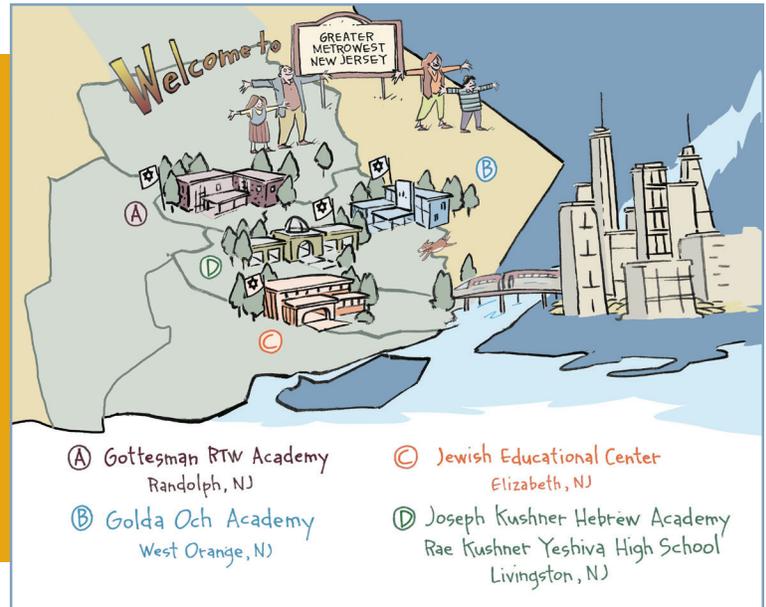
Quest for Teaching Excellence:

Lessons on Collaborative Professional Development in Greater MetroWest NJ

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Quest for Teaching Excellence is a collaborative professional development program founded in 2011 on the notion that excellent teachers build excellent schools. The original four-year, \$1 million program was initiated by the Greater MetroWest Day School Council — a partnership among the four schools, their leaders and philanthropists, and the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest NJ (JCF). Quest is administered by Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ alongside parallel collaborations that target day school affordability and marketing.



School-Based Learning

- Quest supports school-based professional development by funding Dean(s) of Instruction to oversee in-house professional development programs at each school.
- Dean responsibilities differ by school but may include:
 - administering individualized teacher professional development plans and observation protocols
 - extending teacher learning from collaborative and external workshops and conference
 - planning in-service days and school-wide professional learning
 - leading professional learning communities
 - supporting curriculum and accreditation work
 - mentoring teachers

Collaborative Learning

- **2-Year Cycle:**
 - **Year 1:** One-day conference for full faculties of all partnering schools
 - **Year 2:** Targeted collaborative workshops to extend learning of conference and other Quest initiatives
 - **Ongoing:** Role-specific affinity group meetings, school visits, and other teacher/school initiated collaborative programs
- Quest Coordinator facilitates monthly meetings among Deans of Instruction to share best practices, co-plan all-school events, collaborate on smaller learning workshops, and promote teacher visitation among the schools.



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Key Practices

COLLEGIAL CONVERSATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Affinity Groups/ Visits★ Professional Learning Communities★ School Visits Within Quest	CONTENT-BASED LEARNING <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Biannual Conference★ Collaborative Workshops★ School Visits Beyond Quest	PERSONALIZATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Individualized Learning Plans★ Teacher Observations★ Pool of Grants for Workshops and Conferences	EXTENDED LEARNING <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Webinars★ Lunch and Learns★ Additional Follow-up	TEACHER LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Jerry Gottesman Award for Pursuit of Teaching Excellence★ Teacher-led Initiatives★ Mentoring
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Quest Professional Development

- Takes place in a collaborative environment that encourages innovation
- Builds upon collegial relationships within and across schools
- Is supported and encouraged by administrators and includes reflection and discussion with supervisors
- Includes both theoretical and practical learning
- Is rooted in teachers' individual goals and interests but complements schoolwide initiatives
- Is sustained through multiple sessions, reflective procedures, and shared practice with colleagues
- Provides a forum for identifying and developing teacher leaders

Main Impacts

Community and Collaboration

- Among teachers, Quest inspires a desire to learn from others, curiosity across schools, esteem for fellow educators, and respect for schools' diverse religious philosophies.
- Promotes cross-fertilization of ideas across schools through Deans' meetings, conferences, affinity groups, and school visits.
- Economies of scale enable participation in programs that are beyond the means of individual schools.

School Culture Centered Around Professional Learning

- Increased use of faculty meetings for professional development
- Increased number of teacher requests for professional development
- Personal goals and interests
- Full participation in professional development

Teacher Leadership

- Increased teacher-led learning initiatives
- Increased celebration of teacher leadership

Teaching Excellence

- Innovative pedagogies and approaches in classrooms
- Increased teacher retention

Key People



Day School Council
Fundors and Visionaries

Day School Initiative
Convener and Oversight

Greater MetroWest Teachers, Administrators, and Staff

Quest Coordinator
Facilitator

Deans of Instruction
School-Based Professionals



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