

Hidden Sparks is a nonprofit fund whose purpose is to help children with learning differences reach their full potential in school and life. Hidden Sparks develops and supports professional development programs for Jewish day schools to help increase understanding and support for teaching to diverse learners.

Guided by a philosophy that by helping schools meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral differences, ultimately all students will benefit, Hidden Sparks' programs combine professional development in learning and positive behavioral support, guided classroom observation and one-on-one coaching.



Educational Leadership

Claire Wurtzel

Hidden Sparks Educational Co-Director

Claire Wurtzel is the Director of Faculty Development for the New York Center for All Kinds of Minds (AKOM), an institute co-founded in 1995 by Dr. Mel Levine and Charles Schwab to help educators work effectively with struggling learners. As Director of Faculty Development, Ms. Wurtzel oversees Schools Attuned courses, mentor training and Schools Attuned facilitator training for over 400 New York City schools. As one of one of two Educational Directors for Hidden Sparks, she provides training, supervision and ongoing mentoring to the Hidden Sparks teams of coaches, principals and Internal Coaches in twenty-one yeshivot.

Dr. Rona Novick

Hidden Sparks Educational Co-Director

Dr. Rona Novick is an Associate Professor at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration and an Associate Professor of Psychology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She served for many years as the Coordinator of Child Psychology in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Schneider Children's Hospital and as the Clinical Director of the Alliance for School Mental Health, providing outreach services, treatment and training to schools, families and communities. As one of two Educational Directors for Hidden Sparks, Dr. Novick provides training, supervision and ongoing mentoring to the Hidden Sparks teams of coaches, principals and Internal Coaches in twenty-one yeshivot.

Hidden Sparks

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hiddensparks®

helping children reach their potential™

Hidden Sparks was founded in February 2005 with the goal of increasing the capacity of Jewish Day Schools to address the needs of children with learning differences.

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Professional Development External Coach Program

The *Hidden Sparks External Coach Program* offers in-school professional development in understanding and teaching to diverse learning styles, enhancing understanding of behavior, classroom centered coaching, and learning strategies for maximizing student success. This program is operating in eight Jewish day schools and yeshivot in the New York Metropolitan area. It is geared to educators in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Elements of the program include:

- Workshops on Language, Attention, Memory, Temporal Sequential Organization, Social Cognition, Higher Order Cognition, Ordering Systems, Understanding Behavior, Positive Behavioral Support.
- Monthly facilitated meetings with review of *all* students' learning styles. Presentations on aspects of learning and behavior discussed at each meeting with specific application to children in the class and learning strategies for the struggling learner.
- Weekly guided classroom observation and one-to-one teacher coaching.
- Coaches with expertise in learning and behavior work with the teachers to deepen participating teachers' understanding and ability.

Participating schools:

Barkai Yeshiva,
Brooklyn

Hebrew Academy of Nassau County,
West Hempstead

Rabbi Jacob Joseph School for Girls,
Staten Island

Ramaz Lower School,
New York

Shaare Zion Ohel Bracha, Forest Hills

Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, Jericho

Torah Vodaas, Brooklyn
Yeshiva Har Torah,
Bellerose.

Professional Development Internal Coach Program (ICP)

Designed to support a school's long term ability to understand and teach to struggling learners, the *Internal Coach Program* provides training to a member of the school faculty to be a resident Hidden Sparks coach—trained in understanding and teaching to diverse learning styles and behaviors, providing classroom centered coaching and strategies for children, and guiding teachers to be reflective educators.

The goal of the *Hidden Sparks Internal Coach Program* is to deepen and sustain the capacity of schools to understand and teach to diverse learners by training a resident expert in diverse learning styles within the school faculty.

Schools designate a member the faculty who receives training in the Schools Attuned approach, behavior management and coaching. The designee shadows and works cooperatively with a Hidden Sparks coach in school for several months, in preparation for assuming coaching responsibilities.

School Change Administrative Leadership Endeavor (SCALE)

The *Hidden Sparks SCALE* program is aimed at school principals, recognizing that school leaders and administrators are critical to creating and supporting change required for schools to meet the learning and behavior needs of all students.

The program provides principals with 3 in-person training sessions with Hidden Sparks educational leadership. Additionally, principals participate in quarterly meetings for the first year.

An added benefit of the program is that it develops a *Community of Practice (CoP)* among principals implementing various Hidden Sparks programs.

The program content includes an overview of neurodevelopmental pathways of learning and positive behavioral supports, teaching to adult learners, supervision of teachers with different levels of experience and learning styles, and mechanisms for system change.

Hidden Sparks Without Walls and CoPs (WOW/CoPs)

Hidden Sparks WOW is a distance-learning vehicle aimed at increasing professional development opportunities available to Jewish day school/ yeshiva teachers.

A wide selection of courses on student learning and behavior are offered via conference call and presentations.

How it works:

- Participants dial a specified number and are admitted to the "class."
- All participants can follow presentations by inserting course code on any internet-ready computer.
- Participants without internet access can follow the phone call using a hard copy.
- Multi-session classes will be limited to the first 50 participants to ensure maximal interactivity.

A *Community of Practice (CoP)* is a group of individuals who share a concern or face a common set of problems and systematically share knowledge and experience to improve their practice and their organizations.

Modeled after PEJE's (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education) work, the Hidden Sparks CoP will provide a platform for Jewish day school/ yeshiva teachers to regularly come together by telephone to share ideas, concerns and further their professional interests.

Together, Hidden Sparks WOW and Hidden Sparks CoPs

- Increase the opportunity for professional development in all schools, for all teachers regardless of orientation, language, location, gender of teachers, and availability of or interest in internet usage.
- Create a platform for educators to share concerns and ideas.
- Provide an opportunity for educators to engage on formal or informal basis.

For enrollment information about any of our programs, visit the Hidden Sparks website, or contact us by e-mail or telephone.