

For Immediate Release
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Australian educator to lead Menachem Mendel Academy

After conducting an extensive worldwide search, Menachem Mendel Academy (MMA) in Phoenix has named Rabbi Yoseph Wernick as its principal. Born and raised in Australia, Rabbi Wernick learned in Yeshivot and graduate programs in Australia and New York. He earned an MBA after returning to Australia.

MMA opened in August 2018 for boys in grades 1-6, with an integrated curriculum of Torah and English studies, built around customized learning for each child. This fall it will expand through grade 8 for boys and will add a separate girls' division, grades 1-6, to its Central Phoenix campus.

There may be more than 8,200 miles separating Australia from Arizona, but Rabbi Wernick believes it's not so different. While his mother's family came to Australia from Russia in the 1880s, most of the country's Jewish infrastructure only developed with the arrival of European refugees after World War II. Plus, he notes he spent much of his life in towns with tiny Jewish communities.

More

“Believe it or not, there are actually more Jews in Arizona than in all of Australia,” Rabbi Wernick pointed out. Indeed, 107,000 Jews called Arizona home in 2018, compared to Australia’s 91,000.

Rabbi Wernick has nearly 25 years of experience as a teacher and principal in both traditional and innovative settings. He indicated that his familiarity with educational approaches like multi-age classrooms and learning-center based instruction, came from meeting unique challenges presented by leading a school in a small Jewish community with limited facilities and students of diverse ages.

He also successfully led a much larger school through a major re-accreditation process and has been an early adopter of several acclaimed approaches to teaching fundamentals of language and math in a creative way. He also praised the approach of Chafetz Chaim schools to character building as worthy of emulation.

“In his career, Rabbi Wernick has developed a reputation as a master educator, who truly cares about his students and their achievement. His extensive experience mentoring faculty and catering to each individual student’s needs make him an ideal match for MMA,” according to Chaya Mushka Ben-Shabat, Founder and CEO of the school.

“Not only is Rabbi Wernick a Torah scholar of note, he is proficient in human resources and financial management. He has a strong commitment to quality improvement, team building, and embracing all Jews, along with each community’s customs and traditions. Plus, he is approachable and has a great sense of humor!”

Rabbi Wernick and his wife Aliza, a native of Providence, RI, recently moved from Melbourne, Australia to Central Phoenix and look forward to getting to know the community. The couple have 11 children, several of whom will be attending Menachem Mendel Academy. Registration information is at www.mmfamily.org or by calling (480) 909-6942.

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