

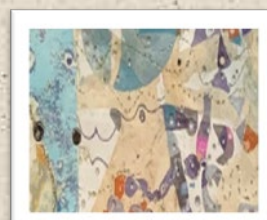
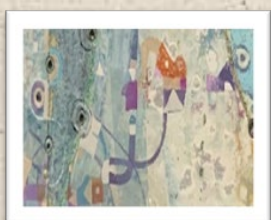
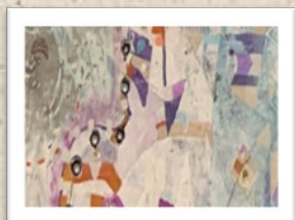
# *Ideas....Policies....Programs....Solutions*

## David Rubel Associates



We are pleased to post a newsletter covering recent project highlights.

- 1. Making workforce training more affordable and accessible: A new guide shows how hundreds of free online self-paced career skills training certification programs can help millions of people with launching a career or climbing their career ladder.*
- 2. New citywide parent navigator support services program for Jewish day school and yeshiva families: PECC's and Title IV family support services.*
- 3. NYC high schools project: Since our last reports, the top ranked high schools group is making progress moving to a more equitable system. Five top ranked high schools now operate in the Bronx and East Brooklyn. The number of students with disabilities now attending top ranked high schools has increased by 500% over the past 10 years.*
- 4. MAKDIM: Boro Park religious and community Leaders launch a major preventive health campaign and organization targeted to Brooklyn Haredi adults. Three years later, the MAKDIM organization is helping thousands of adults with referrals for chronic disease screenings.*

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**1. How hundreds of free self-paced free career skills training certification programs can help millions of people with launching a career or climbing their career ladder**

<b>Problem</b>	<p>In today's fast-changing economy, workers must continuously learn new skills to stay competitive. Lifelong learning is no longer optional—it's essential. Even entry-level jobs now demand industry-specific skills. Certification and credential programs are a popular way to gain these skills, but they often come with high costs and time commitments. Many programs require thousands of dollars and hours of classroom instruction. Career ladder climbers also can benefit from job skills introductory resources to get their feet wet before committing to a lengthy and expensive certification training program. While formal credentials are important, short-term skills training can be just as valuable. Many essential skills don't require certification but can significantly boost career success. The challenge is making these opportunities accessible and affordable for everyone.</p>
<b>Solution</b>	<p>In response to this challenge, the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island-Workforce Development Division created <a href="#"><i>How to Maximize Free or Affordable Online Career Pathways Training Resources</i></a> guide in fall 2020 and posted the guide on its <a href="#">JOBMAP</a> website. The JOBMAP guide curates over 100 free or affordable programs, helping users explore career paths and earn certifications without financial strain. The idea was born during the COVID-19 pandemic, which transformed how adults access education. In person classroom instruction was quickly transformed into zoom platform online classes. Four years later, the shift to online learning has proven lasting. Online platforms now offer flexible, self-paced, and often free or low-cost training options. These include live zoom certification classes and on-demand modules from leading companies including Google, Coursera, Microsoft, Amazon, LinkedIn, CISCO, and Khan Academy, as well as public institutions like CUNY and SUNY. The free classes have the same high quality professional teachers as for pay classes. Online learning offers several advantages: no commuting, flexible scheduling, self-paced and the ability to revisit lessons as needed. These features make it easier for adults to fit learning into their busy lives. Also, for people not sure which career is right for them, free online certifications offer a way to get your feet wet so a solid career path decision can now be made. The certification training programs are a major resource to support the "on and off ramps of the career pathways model".</p> 
<b>Status and Results</b>	<p>Since the publication of the <i>How to Maximize Free or Affordable Online Career Pathways Training Resources Guide</i>, the guide has been publicized as a useful resource by the NYC and national workforce organizations including NYC Employment Training Council, Consortium for Worker Education and NYC government agencies. Positive feedback from JCCGCI workforce clients confirms the value of self-paced learning and the convenience of online access. The program continues to grow, with new resources added regularly and partnerships expanding to include more training providers. Future plans include tracking user outcomes and developing personalized learning pathways.</p> 



## 2. *Parent Navigators are now helping thousands of families with accessing government funded special ed and other support services*

<b><i>Problem</i></b>	<p>The NYC Jewish day schools and yeshivas have a total enrollment of 110,000 students for grades pre-K to 12. At least 45% of students live in low income households based on Free School Lunch participation (130% of the Federal Poverty Level). With such a large number, it's only expected that some children will fall through the cracks by not receiving the academic, emotional or other help they need to thrive in school, at home and in the community. It could be a child with an undiagnosed vision or hearing problem, or a child receiving special ed services but not progressing as expected or a child whose dyslexia condition was never detected or a child suffering in silence because the parents are too overwhelmed to navigate the government and community help systems available. The nonpublic religious schools do not have the level of student support services provided in the public schools (where every school building now has at least one full time social worker, parent coordinator and part time psychologist). While government and community supports do exist, parents need help with accessing the appropriate referral and service. The challenge is how can a model of comparable services operate in the nonpublic schools.</p>
<b><i>Solution</i></b>	<p>Working with NYC yeshiva school leaders Rabbi David Niederman and Sam Sutton, the parent navigator program was launched in 2023 to assist parents to better understand the special education and other support services that are potentially available for students. The navigators inform parents, advocate when needed, assist them with the process of applying for an evaluation and much more. In cases where children are already receiving services, the navigators work to ensure that the services are a good fit for the student and that the parents are involved with monitoring the progress of their child. Schools are also greatly helped because they now have an professional, independent and confidential resource to refer their parents to.</p>  <p>While seeking government services is a great resource, it's not a simple process. It's easy to feel confused, overwhelmed, and "outside" of the process as a parent. The parent navigators tackle these issues and create the most effective synergy with all the different contributors to the child's development. Whether working with the school, the special education providers, the DOE-Committee for Special Education (CSE) office, or all of them together, the navigators ensure that parents' and their children's needs are front and center.</p>
<b><i>Status and Results</i></b>	<p>Now completing its third year of operation, the Parent Navigator program receives an average of 500 calls from parents for help per month. The services are paid for through NYC DOE Title IV funds for nonpublic school children and are the product of a collaborative effort between Agudath Israel, Teach NYS, the Jewish Education Project, UJO of Williamsburg and Sephardic Community Federation. The New York office of the FACTS company oversees the program in conjunction with the NYC-DOE Office of Non-Public School Services.</p>

### 3. **Screened high schools for high achieving students now operate in the South Bronx and East Brooklyn. NYC-DOE top ranked screened high schools are now enrolling impressive numbers of students with disabilities.**

#### **Problem**

"While the eight SHSAT schools continue to consume the attention of elected officials, NYC-DOE, media and advocacy groups, the top ranked screened high schools group remains on the sidelines of public policy and discourse." Since this was written in 2016, screened schools started receiving a lot of public attention-much of it negative. In the past seven years, NYC's top ranked high schools have experienced major changes towards greater geographic equity and increased representation of students with disabilities.

**-Geographic equity:** Our [Equity Discussion Paper: Should the New York City Department of Education Increase the Number of Screened High Schools for Outer-Borough Academically Strong Students](#) published in 2015 and [NYC's Top Ranked Screened High Schools Equity and Diversity Discussion Paper](#) in a 2017 update were the first two reports to document the severe lack of equitable geographic distribution of NYC screened high schools. Of the 50 top ranked screened NYC-DOE high schools, not a single one was located in the Bronx or East Brooklyn (Brownsville, East New York, Canarsie). High achieving students living in the Bronx or East Brooklyn had no choice but to endure long commutes to attend a screened high school that would offer them a challenging college prep program.

**-SHSAT vs Screened:** Our two reports shows that for New York City's academically strong students, the intense and exclusive focus on the SHSAT misses the big picture. 10 times more students attend screened high schools than the SHSAT exam schools. Prior to 2016, there had been barely a mention about this issue. Our screened high school two Discussion Papers were well covered by NYC education reporters including David Cruz in the Norwood News and Susan Edelman in the New York Post. The two reports also provided a solid fact based response to the canard from then DOE Chancellor Carranza attacking screened high schools for their lack of racial equality. *The system of screens, the system of selectivity, the system of privilege that determines which kids get to go where . . . It's segregating our schools".*

Since the two reports were circulated to stakeholders, several more studies and reports on NYC's screened high schools were issued. To Chancellor Carranza, the NY Times and other critics of the screened high schools, we say "*Anyone who wants to attack these schools should understand they might be hurting the students they're trying to help.*"




**-Top ranked high schools dramatically increase the number of IEP students:** ["A Question for Discussion- Can we hope to see the next Richard Branson, David Bries, Whoopi Goldberg, Charles Schwab, Steven Spielberg, and Wendy Wasserstein in New York City's Top Public High Schools?"](#) Our reports are the first and only ones to document an impressive increase in the number of students with disabilities (SWD) at the top ranked NYC high schools that has been occurring over the past 10 years. In 2011, the top 25 high schools enrolled a total of 428 students; in 2020 that number had increased to 2,025 students with disabilities (SWD). A 500% increase! The report also discussed ways that high schools provide supports to ensure SWD succeed once they get there. The reports were discussed in NYC-DOE City Committee for Special Education [annual reports](#) and in several [articles](#) in Chalkbeat NY.

#### **Status and Results**

There is plenty of good news for screened high schools and the challenge of geographic equity. From none in 2017, there are now four high schools in the top ranked 50 high schools group located in the Bronx and East Brooklyn. Two are NYC-DOE district schools and two are charter schools. The NYC-DOE recently opened up a Bard College Early High School campus in the in the South Bronx and another campus this year in Brownsville Brooklyn. Finally, all of the Mayoral candidates for the 2025 election support keeping screened high schools with the exception of one ([ChalkbeatNYC 5-28-25](#)).



#### 4. **MAKDIM: Boro Park Community Leaders launch major preventive health campaign targeted to Brooklyn Haredi Jewish adults**

<b>Problem</b>	<p>To fulfill requirements of a COVID Disparities Program grant funding from the NYC–Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the <a href="#">Boro Park Jewish Community Council (BPJCC)</a> hired David Rubel Associates (DRA) to conduct a community health needs assessment and health equity action plan in the spring of 2022. One of the main findings of the Boro Park Community Health Needs Assessment study was a pervasive lack of understanding, appreciation or acceptance of adult and older adult preventive health care (such as nutrition, senior citizen health, chronic diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, obesity and arthritis). Based on interviews with BPJCC newly formed doctors advisory board and with focus groups of consumers, one urgent piece of information that was heard each time was how few male (and female) adults have an annual medical check-up. The findings pointed directly to a pressing need to undertake a massive community education campaign around the importance of preventive health using screenings/testing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the study also found that there is a dearth of primary care providers serving the Boro Park adult population. Also, there is significant vaccine hesitancy and misinformation concerning the importance of children getting their routine vaccines.</p>
<b>Solution</b>	<p><b>MAKDIM: a community health partnership:</b> The BPJCC study was used by Dr. Jason Zimmerman, medical director of Citywide Hatzolah, Chaim Fleisher, a Boro Park community health advocate, <a href="#">JOWMA</a> and the community along with the Boro Park Jewish Community Council to launch the MAKDIM Preventive Health Program – a health prevention initiative to avert illness before it strikes. MAKDIM quickly became a network with well-respected medical and allied health professionals, medial facilities and health clinics, community organizations, and the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene. The goal of MAKDIM is promoting disease and illness prevention and saving lives with the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ promoting public health and safety by informing the community of vital health prevention and safety information and resources.</li> <li>▪ encouraging people to go to the doctor for health checkups including regular physical exams and skin checks, and health screenings including cholesterol and blood pressure screening, eye exams, immunizations, mammograms, and colonoscopies.</li> <li>▪ Stressing the importance of getting tested for various illnesses and disorders <i>before</i> symptoms develop.</li> <li>▪ Distributing brochures and posters with essential health information, and a Health Journal, in English and Yiddish.</li> <li>▪ Community Health Workers work with clients in scheduling appointments for checkups and screenings, and provide clients with critical health educational materials, information and guidance, and with resources as to where to get help from trusted sources.</li> <li>▪ A dedicated MAKDIM hotline to connect clients to our Health Workers, as well as a dedicated MAKDIM website where individuals can find out more information and schedule tests and screenings.</li> </ul> 
<b>Status and Results</b>	<p><b>Results:</b> MAKDIM is saving lives! In its <a href="#">first year</a> of operation, over 1,000 individuals have gone for colonoscopy and other preventive health screenings using MAKDIM referrals. <a href="#">MAKDIM</a> succeeds with the underlying strong support of the Boro Park religious, medical and community leaders. MAKDIM is now three years going strong supported by a referral network of medical professionals, hospitals, publicly funded health clinics, outreach workers. In addition to the referral network, extensive social media postings, a series of culturally sensitive healthy lifestyle lectures are offered by leading experts take place each year.</p>