

An Open Letter to the Jewish Community of Rockland County,

The Rockland County Board of Rabbis expresses sadness that the Reuben Gittelman Hebrew Day School is closing in June after forty years of educating students, creating community, and standing as a beacon of Jewish education. Thousands of Rockland students have learned Judaic and general studies in a warm, nurturing environment under the careful guidance of dedicated teachers and principals.

Jewish families educate their children in a variety of ways including afternoon religious schools, day schools and yeshivas. We believe that our diverse Jewish community needs to maintain all of these options to remain vibrant.

Thankfully, a group of concerned parents has made significant progress toward forming a new community Jewish day school to be located at the Rockland Jewish Community Campus. The planned Rockland Jewish Academy (RJA) promises to offer excellence in Judaic and general education for children from a wide spectrum of Jewish homes – Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox and secular. RJA will be *our community* school, catering to *our* children, relying on *our own community's* leadership to shape its mission. RJA will benefit from initial oversight by the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester, one of the most successful day schools in the country, with direct involvement of Dr. Elliot Spiegel, Headmaster. Consistent with the trend many new schools are following, RJA will function as an independent Jewish day school, not affiliated with a specific denomination.

We wholeheartedly support the Rockland Jewish Academy and strong, meaningful Jewish education for all families, for all children. We believe that broad community support of RJA is critical to our Jewish future in this county. We welcome a discussion about the merits of the Jewish day school option for families and encourage exploration and consideration of this new school. More information is available at its web site, www.rocklandjewishacademy.org or through email, info@rocklandjewishacademy.org.

The Rockland County Board of Rabbis (approved January 19, 2012)

**Rabbi Jeffrey Abraham, Congregation Sons of Israel, Nyack
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