

The story of your child's creation.

*D'var Kesher from the Principal*

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## **The Question Is Not *If* You Are Intelligent, but *How* Are You Intelligent**

Think back to the world before GPS and Waze began telling us how to get everywhere. How did you get directions? Did you study a map to understand the layout of a town? Did you write down the instructions? Did you have someone tell you directions? Did you remember how to get somewhere once you'd driven it once?

Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University, developed the theory of Multiple Intelligences in 1983. This ground-breaking theory demonstrated that the critical question is not *if* someone is intelligent, but rather, *how* is someone intelligent. Embedded in this paradigm shift is the assumption that we all have some kind of intelligence, and that there are multiple intelligences. Indeed, Gardner's research uncovered eight different human intelligences.



Are you visual-spatial (picture smart)? Are you verbal-linguistic (word smart)? Are you bodily-kinesthetic (body smart)? Everyone has things they are really good at – and often this corresponds with how you learn information. For example, when someone has strong interpersonal intelligence (people smart), in turn, they tend to remember information more effectively when they hear it in a story or associate it with a person or situation.

I have had many students through the years who have demonstrated their intelligence in these areas. A favorite challenge for a teacher is to identify pathways into a given content area for students with strengths in *any* of these intelligences. When I taught psychology, I made sure that students had opportunities to hear me speak about the material, see the notes and as often as possible with diagrams or images that organized

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the information, opportunities to reflect on their own experiences, opportunities to interview other people, and to develop their own experiments to test their theories.

At CJDS, our teachers are dedicated to sophisticated, critical inquiry for every student, at every level. This means they can and must find multiple pathways to understanding for their students. Making a comic strip to illustrate a story, acting out Torah stories in costume, building models of Jerusalem out of blocks, planting seeds and then collecting the herbs that grow from them and making tea or delivering the vegetables to the elderly, are all ways that our faculty make learning accessible and engaging.

We are very excited about our new Math curriculum, [Engage NY or Eureka Math](#), for this same reason. It provides teachers with suggestions for what we call “multi-modal” learning. In other words, it offers students multiple pathways into the material. For example, there are hands-on tactile resources, color-coded visual images, opportunities for collaborative work so that students can work together and teach each other. I am thrilled about this new curriculum and we have added additional time to our school schedule for Math. In addition to providing many ways for students to learn the material, the new techniques are more intuitive, which is especially important for any students (and parents) who have sadly felt that math is hard or scary.

CJDS is committed to a two-teacher model. This means that both the General Studies and Judaic Studies teachers are in school full time. The two classroom teachers are able to support students at all times, and yet, we've found that especially in older grades where a certain level of content knowledge is required, it is to our benefit to have a second General or Judaic Studies teacher in the room to assist. To further maximize our teachers' opportunities to allow every student to succeed and excel academically, I have designed a schedule where teachers are “pushing in” to each other's classes to lend their expertise to another class. Teachers can take advantage of the additional teacher in the room by inviting the visiting teacher to facilitate a group that might need more advanced material or working with an individual student who might need some one-on-one attention.

So, what's your preferred method of learning? How are you intelligent? This Shabbat, talk to your children about what they are good at. Do they like to build? Do they like to sing a song to remember the States in alphabetical order? Do they write in a journal to organize their thoughts? All of these strengths can be put to use to build skills sets and concept attainment across *all* academics.

Shabbat Shalom,



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Principal