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 $Greg\ Joseph,\ the\ Jewish\ placekicker\ on\ the\ Cleveland\ Browns,\ kicking\ the\ winning\ field\ goal\ earlier\ this\ month.\ \textbf{Page}\ 104$

FROM THE EDITOR

The Kirsten Crisis

BY LARRY GORDON

he idea in the political process as we know it today is to project an image that may or may not have anything to do with reality. Those running for office and up for election in less than two weeks want you to think about their opponent in extreme and often distorted terms. The goal is to say and do anything that can manipulate the thought process so that when you enter the voting booth, you vote for the candidate you think of favorably and who has the best chance to win.

While many of us are extremely disappointed with New York Senator Charles Schumer and the denigrating and unbecoming way that he speaks about President Trump, the reality is Continued on Page 7

Addressing Mental Health At School

BY SARA SELIGSON

tudy after study substantiates that more students than ever are struggling with anxiety, depression, drug addiction, and self-harming and suicidal behaviors. Our community-based social-service organizations are helping greater numbers of individuals and families as the needs expand so rapidly.

At the same time, many students still don't seek or receive the emotional and psychological supports they need until it is too late.

Apart from our ethical and *halachic* obligations to ensure the well-being of our children, new state legal requirements enacted through education policy in New York State *Continued on Page 105*

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MENTAL HEALTH

Continued from Front Cover

mandate that schools teach mental health. Moreover, new federal funding announced for this school year-up to \$4 million for Jewish private schools in New York Stateincentivizes schools to train educators in mental health. This is wonderful news for our community, but only if our Jewish day schools and yeshivas seize the opportunity to expand their role in the healthy living equation for our youth.

Students need to develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential for success in school and in life. In order for our children to learn these skills effectively, Jewish educators must find novel ways to teach these skills within our existing education programs.

The Jewish Education Project's Day School Team has been working with schools to teach educators how to put into use social emotional education. Among the thousands of Jewish educators each year who participate in our government-funded professional-development programs, including our annual Yeshiva Day School Day of Learning,150 educators from 64 schools have specifically turned to the Jewish Education Project to learn cutting-edge tools to bring to their classrooms, to ensure that all of their students are able to thrive. These tech-

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niques include mindfulness, Responsive Classroom, and learning from renowned mental-health professionals like Dr. David Pelcovitz about anxiety and depres-

We expect a surge of demand from schools and educators seeking these services. This past summer, New York State implemented a legal requirement to teach mental health in all schools and released new social emotional learning benchmarks. Many yeshivas-including Yeshiva Har Torah, Bais Yaakov of Queens, Chabad Lubavitch of Northeast Queens. Yeshiva Tiferes Moshe, Yeshivah of Flatbush, and Beth JaSAR Academy, and Torah Academy for Girls, among others-have already started implementing these best practices. This new legal imperative is accompanied by a strong financial incentive to participate: the United States Department of Education has significantly increased funding to a new program, Student Support and Academic Achievement Grants. This program-the funds for which must be shared equally between public- and private-school students-may be used to support comprehensive school mental health, drug and violence prevention, and other health- and physical-educa-

In light of the new legislation and funding opportunity, the Jewish Education Project is working with the newly formed School Mental Health Resource and Training Center, a project of Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc., to help Jewish schools implement the new mental-health

education law; Sara Selig-

son, managing director of

day schools and yeshivot, has

been appointed to the NYS

Mental Health Education

Advisory Council. The Jewish Education Project is the lead organization in New York supporting Jewish schools in impleopment and educational pro- 105 gramming for schoolwide improvement through the appropriate use of federal education funding. We are excited to be at the ready to assist our Jewish schools in implementing mental-health education, social emotional learning, and to help our students build resilience and positive decision-making for lifelong success. ■

Sara Seligson is managing director of day schools and yeshivot for the Jewish Education Project (formerly known as the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York) and represents all Jewish schools on the NYSED Commissioner's Advisory Council for Nonpublic Schools. She was recently appointed to the NYS Mental Health Education Advisory

