

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Rabbi Zev Friedman  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Rambam Mesivta High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 15 Frost Lane  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lawrence State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11559-1808

County Nassau

Telephone (516) 371-5824 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.rambam.org/ E-mail info@rambam.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mrs. Naomi Rosenblum E-mail naomi@rambam.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lawrence Union Free School District Tel. (516) 295-8000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Dr. Zevi Isseroff  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave .blank*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	48	0	48
10	40	0	40
11	49	0	49
12 or higher	40	0	40
<b>Total Students</b>	177	0	177

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 100 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: ≤1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	175
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

There are no non-English languages represented in the school.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 20

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

12 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 29

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	8
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 9:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	92%	93%	93%	92%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	43
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	98%
Enrolled in a community college	2%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Rambam Mesivta promotes academic excellence both in Jewish and secular studies, personal character development, leadership, social and political activism, sensitivity to others, and community service.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Rambam is open as usual with accommodations for students who are exposed to COVID-19, as per CDC guidelines, or are high risk. They have Zoom access for all their classes. Special equipment, cameras, microphones, and laptops for students, was purchased to prepare for this eventuality.

All teachers, administration, and students are required to wear masks and remain behind plexiglass barriers during their classes.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Rambam Mesivta was fortunate to be awarded the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School award back in 2015. Receiving the reward has instilled an additional sense of school pride into all the students, faculty, and administration. Applications to the school have increased as students are excited about the idea of being part of a school with such a reputable award. Congresswoman Kathleen Rice even came to present the school with a certificate of recognition and entered the school's name and honor into the Congressional record. The teachers themselves strive to live up to the standard set by Blue Ribbon and have all taken great ownership over their teaching and continued personal education. While global values have shifted over the course of the last few decades, the pillars of Rambam, Torah/Biblical roots; character development; and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of life, as well as personal responsibility and a commitment to bettering the world have withstood the fickleness of the philosophy of ever-changing trends, and withstood the test of time.

Rambam Mesivta was founded 29 years ago as an outgrowth of an adult education class that our Dean, Rabbi Dr. Zev Meir Friedman, conducted with members of the Five Towns community, located in Nassau County. Many of the attendees, doctors, lawyers, and businessmen were enamored with the Rabbi's message that not only can an Orthodox Jew pursue a professional career, but that academic excellence and contributing to society at large enhances one's religious outlook and experience. Being that many of them had sons in seventh and eighth grade, they approached Rabbi Friedman and asked him to start a high school that promoted excellence in both Jewish and College preparatory studies.

The high school was to be aptly named Rambam Mesivta - Maimonides High School, in tribute to the great philosopher, physician, codifier, Rabbi and community leader, Maimonides. What began as a vision for prospective high school students living in the Five Towns area, quickly emerged as a school of choice for many bright and motivated students living in the greater metropolitan area, including Brooklyn, Queens, and multiple towns across Nassau County. Indeed, the school is now even receiving applications from individuals as far as Deer Park, Suffolk (the next county over), and numerous new students from progressive Crown Heights, Brooklyn are traveling out to Rambam in search of greener academic pastures. The idea of pursuing academic excellence and successfully integrating into society, all whilst remaining true to one's Jewish values, resonated with many and continues to resonate with a new generation of parents and students.

Given the fact that Rambam was designed to inspire its students to become leaders and "all that they can be," the school has amassed several notable accomplishments since its inception. On the academic front, virtually 100% of its graduates have pursued higher education in universities with many later attending post-graduate schools. Its SAT & ACT scores have consistently ranked in the top 15% of the country. Practically every single year, the school is overrepresented in the percentage of AP scholars that it produces. These academic accomplishments stem from the individualistic, caring approach the school takes with every single one of its students. Rambam's unique "small school by design" approach allows them to work with every student on a one-to-one basis.

Students garner a disproportionate number of merit-based scholarships, gaining admission to prestigious universities. For more than a decade students have been awarded an average of twenty five to thirty thousand per capita of merit-based, academic scholarships. Students have been awarded Siemens Westinghouse, Davidson, and Intel Science awards in national and international competitions. Students have been accepted to the prestigious Garcia Center for Polymers at Engineered Interfaces of Stony Brook University where they can do research with nanoparticles under the guidance of world renowned Professor Miriam Rafailovich.

Students have taken the lead in pursuing social justice. They were the first (and perhaps only) private school to raise money for the victims of the tsunami in 2004 by spearheading a project called "Kids for Kids," which enabled the student leaders to present a much appreciated check for thousands of dollars to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. Over the past decade, they made their voices heard by holding protest rallies against Saudi support of terror, French anti-Semitism, the presence of Nazi war criminals living in the United States and human rights' violations in Cuba. Many of these protests are covered by the media and

students learn leadership skills in organizing the protest, contacting the media and being able to articulate to the reporters covering the event the significance of their cause. Recently, they again took the lead and embarked on a campaign to help victims of terror in the Middle East by setting up a CrowdRise fundraising effort which raised close to \$30,000 in one week. After over a decade of rallying in Jackson Heights, Queens, the students' efforts were rewarded when infamous Nazi prison guard, Jakiw Palij, was deported out of the country. A victory for justice and the victims of the Holocaust. Newspapers from the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Daily News interviewed students and reported on this victory. The school was also mentioned by Eli Rosenbaum in a ceremony at The White House.

One of the missions of Rambam Mesivta is to instill in its graduates the importance of values and character development. Alumni have been referred to as "Rambam Men," characterized by being sensitive to the small things in society that affect the tone of our society. It is known that they are the individuals who always say please and thank you, return the shopping cart to the store, and stand out in their various communities as being those individuals that can be relied upon to get the job done. These Rambam Men take leadership roles in their communities and places of work and are not on the sidelines when it comes to helping others, building up the community, or lending a helping hand.

Rambam's admissions policy is strictly merit-based. Students who exhibit good character, strong intellectual capabilities, and motivation to succeed are ideal candidates for the school. To gain admission, every single student is interviewed by the Dean, Rabbi Friedman, and Principal Rabbi Yotav Eliach and/or Associate Principal Mr. Hillel Goldman. That meeting is the beginning of what would later become a strong bond between the administration and students. Personalized, individual attention and knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each student is one of the secrets to Rambam's success. Identifying areas of a young man's talent and passion is the key to enabling that young man to find an outlet for his talent, ensuring that he will taste success and develop a strong and well deserved sense of self-confidence, which is so necessary for a student's ability to achieve and grow academically.

Fortunately, in the close to three decades of Rambam's existence, the school has produced hundreds of proud alumni, successful in their life's dream of integrating professionalism with Jewish values and commitment. From lawyers to doctors, to engineers and teachers; from the courtroom to the boardroom to the classroom; from the pulpit to the CEO's office to the operating room, the graduates of Rambam are secure in their values, determined to be diligent, and eager to continue learning to better serve those in need.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

Since its inception almost 30 years ago, Rambam has dedicated itself to excellence in all areas. Although these values have not changed, we have adapted to the new reality thrust upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although we have continued to offer in-school education (with barriers, masks, and social distancing). We have also modified all our classrooms with technological adaptations to allow students who choose to remain at home and Zoom in to all classes. Students who are required to quarantine by CDC guidelines fall into this group as well as those students who philosophically feel that coming to in-person school poses a risk they choose not to take.

As of December 30, 2020, the total amount of students participating in Zoom learning is approximately 20. To preserve educational integrity that meets the standards of excellence, expectation for all students both in person and those who learn remotely is the same. Candidly, there was pushback from some students and parents during COVID-19 especially in Spring 2020.

In May of that year, we announced that even though SAT exams and New York State Regents exams were being canceled, Rambam still will be requiring traditional Regents type exams. Again, there was pushback with complaints that it's "too hard" and "None of my friends in other schools have finals."

After the exams were over, our decision was vindicated. While some parents and students complained, they looked back and remarked, "You are the only school with standards," and "we learned a lot and were challenged." At a time when the bar is constantly being lowered, the administration at Rambam took a stand that not only challenged and strengthened the academic abilities of the student body, but reinforced its mission that adversity is an opportunity and overcoming it, and not backing down from the challenge is what builds good habits, character, and the leaders of tomorrow.

Most importantly, the implicit message to our students was, don't give up on excellence! Students are required to take four years of English. In ninth grade students develop skills in process writing that have application to all subject areas. Students are trained to write and facilitate clear, correct, and creative writing. The study of literature emphasizes American authors. In tenth grade students in this course read books by prominent authors from Britain and Europe. Students are also prepared for the PSAT's and SAT's through lessons on vocabulary, analogies, and other comprehension exercises. Eleventh grade students study great works in American literature and English language skills needed for the SAT are integrated into the course. In either AP English or Honors English, seniors are required to thoroughly understand literacy devices.

Students are required to take a minimum of three years of mathematics and are encouraged to take mathematics in their senior year. Students who enter the Mesivta with advanced standing in Regents mathematics proceed to the next level of the three-year Regents sequence. Integrated Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry develop students' mathematical and problem solving skills while preparing them for the New York State Math Regents. Students who have completed the three year Regents curriculum by the end of the sophomore year take a two year Calculus sequence, Calculus AB, and Calculus BC, leading to the AP Calculus BC exam. For those juniors and seniors who have completed Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry but choose not to take Calculus they can take Business Math, Accounting or AP Statistics. All seniors take a course in Economics.

Students are required to take at least three years of Regents-level science courses and are encouraged to take four years of science. In ninth grade all the students are required to take Biology, culminating with a Regents in June. Tenth graders have a choice of taking the Chemistry or Earth Science course, with a Regents at the end of the year. Eleventh and twelfth grade science courses include Physics, AP Physics, AP Computer Science, AP Biology, AP Chemistry and AP Psychology, Forensic Science, EMT, Physiology and Jewish Law.

Students are required to complete four years of social studies and to successfully complete both the Regents examination in Global Studies and American History. In ninth grade students take Global History and Geography I followed by Global History in tenth grade culminating in the Regents exam. Tenth grade students also have the option to take AP European History. All eleventh graders are required to take American History with the Regents at the end of the year. Students also have the option of taking AP American History.

Additionally, because Rambam is an Orthodox Jewish school, we require students to take a full load of Jewish Studies which include Mishnah, Talmud, Jewish Law, Bible, and Jewish Philosophy. During all four years at Rambam the students are exposed to all the above-mentioned core Jewish writings in the form of courses and special study groups. Just like we are preparing our students to attend good colleges and excel there, we are preparing them to be practicing, knowledgeable Jews who can continue learning Jewish sources, so their Judaism can grow with them. To that end we also gear all our students to continue formally studying Jewish sources in post High School Yeshivot in Israel or the U.S.

Rambam Mesivta produces young men who are honest, ethical Jewish and American citizens. They are prepared to excel in their post High School Religious Studies, and they are prepared to excel at the Universities that they will be attending.

### **1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

Rambam Mesivta has an intensive dual curriculum that combines the best analytical thinking in Jewish Philosophy and Law with College Prep courses that test the limits of the students' abilities and creativity. Additionally, Rambam prepares students to be lifelong learners and gift them with the skills they need to be responsible, college level students and successful adults. The school day is from 7:55AM - 5:25PM and has rigorous hours and standards that prepare the student not only for college but for the workforce. Despite the long day, scores of students stay after school for cultural clubs like Book Clubs and the Classic Film Society; sports such as basketball and hockey; and academic teams like Debate and Mock Trial. Students are in school for a long time on a daily basis and yet most find Rambam so engaging that they find themselves at Rambam beyond the official school hours.

A team of guidance counselors, administrators, and social workers work with the students to hone their executive functioning skills. They are taught how to maintain a calendar; take notes; balance their workload and develop time management skills. They are also taught how to use technology safely and responsibly through assemblies and the relationship the school has with The Digital Citizenship Project. The school's writing program focuses on "Reading to Write, Writing to Learn", and teaches students how to write college level research papers by the end of junior year. Everything from brainstorming to editing, to footnoting, to quoting sources is covered, and students using guidelines from literary theorists such as Harold Bloom, Margorie Garber, and Christopher Booker, learn to read deeply and critically. The classroom instruction flows naturally into the school's extracurricular activities program which has three book clubs, a writers' guild, and at last count, five student publications. The STEM program at Rambam also prepares students for work in the medical and engineering fields. Students engage in challenging lab work and take numerous AP's including AP Physics, AP Bio, AP Chem, AP Stats, and AP Calculus AB/BC. The students also compete in the local and State Math leagues and regularly place in the Top Ten in the State. Furthermore, the school's Robotics and Drone Clubs help the students prepare for life as engineers and they regularly place in the Top 3, year after year, in numerous STEM competitions.

The school's Community Service and Activism Clubs also give students the opportunity to be leaders and organize and galvanize the community within Rambam as well as the community at large. Every year, through countless tournaments and drives, the school donates thousands of dollars to causes helping those with special needs; the elderly; the destitute; and the dispossessed. Additionally, the school has arranged internships for students where they have clerked at the local Village Hall; helped in doctor and dentist offices; and even had certain students help teach Judaic Studies classes.

knowing how to think critically, write effectively, and help consistently. They are among the top of the class in all the colleges they attend.

**1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Rambam is a dual curriculum school. Students arrive at school at 7:55 AM and depart at 5:30 PM. Many of them travel for a minimum of 30 minutes and up to an hour and 15 minutes to and from school. It clearly is a full day!

Our experience and results have proven that a full day schedule and we use in our students that challenges are good and that one 'grows' by Persevering.... (not complaining).

The morning sessions which are dedicated to the study of the Bible, Talmud, Jewish Law & Ethics, prepares students to meet the challenges of the outside world's relevant issues. Issues such as the importance of transparency and the avoidance of conflict of interest are all examined with the mindset of comparing contemporary issues with religious thoughts and questions that were raised over 1000 years ago.

Rambam Mesivta is looking to produce "The Complete Person." Taking its basis from the classic Liberal Arts education, combined with a dual curriculum of Judaic Studies, Rambam wants its graduates to be culturally cultivated and healthy in both body and mind.

In terms of the Arts, Art class is a requirement for all seniors and meets once a week. The school also offers to the entire student body the Classic Film Club featuring the annual "Alfred Hitchcock Day"; the Rambam Band; Guitar for Beginners Club; Acapella featuring "The Harmonides;" the Art Society; the annual Shakespeare Ides of March soliloquy contest; and the school play - this year being "An Evening in the Twilight Zone." The Arts program promotes analytical thinking and creativity. By allowing students to shine in the Arts, the school affords opportunities for collaboration, leadership skills, and community service, as most of these programs, are designed to give back. For instance, the acapella group sings at nursing homes and at homes for the mentally disabled.

At Rambam, academics and learning are rounded out by a strong athletic department that focuses just as much on character building as it does on winning. Rambam fields several different athletic teams including: Varsity & Junior Varsity Basketball, Hockey, Softball and Bowling; Tennis, Soccer, and Flag-Football. There is also a sports club, a school-wide annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament and frequent tournaments such as dodgeball, soccer, etc. Gym class itself is held twice a week for most students and Health Ed is a requirement for all seniors. While winning games and making the playoffs/championships is always exciting, at Rambam, sports are principally about learning important life values through athletics. Teamwork, commitment, and dedication to reaching a goal; sportsmanship, camaraderie, and friendship - these are the messages that the student athletes internalize at Rambam.

All freshmen students take Hebrew language with the top class having a direct connection to a teacher based in Israel via Zoom. As sophomores or juniors, students can continue to take Hebrew or opt for Spanish. All Foreign Language classes meet four times a week. Rambam Mesivta follows the program's Foreign Language requirements. Taking a Foreign Language promotes the idea of being a well-rounded person and sharpens the memorization and communication skills of the leaders of tomorrow. The school's emphasis on Zionism is buttressed by the fact that Hebrew is a requirement for all freshmen.

Rambam offers AP Computers, meeting five times a week, and will continue to offer similar courses. All freshmen take a special STEM class where they learn things from programming to engineering. The school also offers a high school level engineering course as well as a Varsity and Junior Varsity Robotics team which compete in various tournaments throughout the world. The school's emphasis on technology is the foundation to producing students who can compete in a technologically advancing world.

A Rambam student goes beyond the curriculum. He is a lifelong learner who is as comfortable at a Shakespeare play as he is on the basketball court, at a keyboard/piano or computer; or meeting someone from a new culture. He is a citizen of the world who recognizes the significance of intertextuality and cultural relativism. He can speak multiple languages, but what's more he can appreciate and participate in the Grand Conversation!

### **3. Academic Supports:**

Students at Rambam have a wide range of abilities and strengths, though the common denominator is that they are all motivated, caring young men. From the student who scores a 1600 on the SAT, to the student who needs double time to take an exam, and must have questions read aloud to him, Rambam seeks to support each student so that he can reach his potential.

With students coming from 15 different Middle Schools, some of which stress Judaic Academics while others focus on General Studies, the school recognizes that students arrive at Rambam with disparate backgrounds and, because of their origins, some exceed grade level in certain subjects, while others lag. To raise students' scores and abilities, the school has the freshmen take a Study Skills Course that teaches them time management, executive functioning skills, study skills, and note-taking. Recently the school also had a junior and senior address the 9th grade and offer their own "Students' Guide to Rambam Study Skills Course."

Additionally, there is a Resource Room staffed by a professional Social Worker who assists students with studying and balancing their workload. There is also a School Psychologist and a Social Worker on hand every day to help students with their social-emotional needs. Those students who need more time to take an exam or complete an assignment can do so, and teachers are made aware of students' IEP's and 504's and implement them in a sensitive manner. Students with documented learning disabilities may be assigned a "reader" or a scribe during exams to best enable them to succeed. The school currently has a student with vision issues and all teachers have increased the font size on their Smart Board presentations. Students that need a separate testing room are accommodated as well, and the school has a Special Services Coordinator who collects notes from teachers on a weekly basis and disseminates it to the students who qualify to receive notes. Additionally, evidence based interventions, such as daily report cards and self-monitoring techniques are utilized for struggling students, and teachers send out weekly emails to all parents and students apprising them of the work that will be covered. In certain cases, a student may have his schedule modified so he can have an additional study/prep period. Usually, a student who has an additional study period as a freshman or sophomore, no longer needs it by junior or senior year as he has gained the skills necessary and grown as a student to the point where he is weaned off this extra help.

The goal of the Academic Support System at Rambam is to help each student gain the skills to be an independent lifelong learner and a credit to society. The school recently received a call from a graduate who couldn't pass the Chemistry Regents in 10th grade, despite all the accommodations the school was able to offer. The student called the school to inform us that he was just accepted to a Pharmacy Program and he credited Rambam with giving him the drive to succeed, work hard, and work smart, that empowered him to reach his potential. Students who attend Rambam are not just learning subject matter, they are gaining executive functioning skills; learning time management; and cultivating organizational skills and proper study habits that serve them for the rest of their lives.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Rambam Mesivta is not about teaching texts. It is about teaching life skills and promoting personal growth. Character development and true concern for the needs of others is a core component of Rambam's educational philosophy. As a result of this climate of sensitivity, bullying, which is so common in our society, does not exist in Rambam. Students can walk into school with their heads held high and focus on their academic success. At graduation, parents and graduates have remarked time and time again of how important the "safe environment" of Rambam was to their high school experience. Rambam realizes that there are a hundred and seventy seven individuals walking around in the same building. Each student comes to school each day with his own strengths and weaknesses, inspired to do his best.

Rambam is designed to support and maximize the potential of each student. We celebrate their personal successes, publicly when appropriate, and point out to them, privately of course, ways in which they can continue to improve themselves.

The past few years have brought about changes in society. Some changes reflect "trends" and others are due to amazing innovations in technology. Rambam is cognizant of these changes and embraces them. In the case of technology such as Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Team, Rambam has embraced and utilized them to the benefit of our students. However, Rambam has also kept its standards and expectations and worked hard to fit temporal trends into everlasting values. Rambam has been able to do so by spending more administrative time talking to students both individually and in small groups, explaining that values of ethics and morality often transcends the 'latest' things they read about in the lives and actions of movie stars and politicians. Schoolwide assemblies held currently by Zoom also reinforce the idea that values are eternal.

Teachers, coaches, and mentors are carefully selected to provide the proper guidance and structure to our students, recognizing of course, that today a premium is placed on "feeling good." While we recognize that self-worth is the basis for success and continued striving, we maintain that it should stem from a feeling of true accomplishment and self-fulfillment.

Cementing a relationship with parents through frequent communication and open discussion, coupled with offering a challenging course load and maintaining expectations during the pandemic, has enabled Rambam to continue its mission of educating, guiding, and inspiring its students during COVID-19.

Our students are encouraged to succeed, and they do!

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

In today's high tech world, everything is global. Nonetheless, nothing can replace one on one relationships which foster special connections. Obviously, with the current global pandemic, Rambam has had to adapt to continue this unique connection.

General information about school events and activities is disseminated via email and schoolwide WhatsApp groups; however, individual student accomplishments and achievements are recognized by personal phone calls, Zoom meetings and/or letters. Additionally, depending upon the nature of the accomplishment, the student is recognized in a public manner with the presentation of a plaque acknowledging his achievement. Presumably, the student goes home and shares such with his parents, who further reinforce his desire to continue to achieve and succeed.

Recognizing and rewarding success breeds an atmosphere of promoting even greater success. Being available to students whenever they have a concern is an important factor in addressing their needs and promoting their success. Since the inception of the school, administrators have always maintained an "open door policy," enabling students to feel comfortable to talk to anyone on the administrative team.

Additionally, an emphasis is placed on encouraging students to advocate for themselves and develop this most important life skill. After all, when the boys grow up, they must have the confidence to ask their boss for a raise and not have to resort to calling their parents to ask for them!

The new reality that all schools have been handed, has allowed Rambam to further its connection with their families. The virtual Mom's Book Club allows members of the administration to engage mothers in a relaxed environment and discuss facets of the school with them as well. Zoom and other technologies has also allowed the school to meet more frequently with parents to give feedback on their children as well as receive feedback regarding the school.

In addition to the core value of promoting individual success, Rambam feels strongly about students being active members of the community at large. To inspire community involvement, the school has a special Volunteer Club, which provides opportunities for students to visit the elderly in nursing homes, veterans in hospitals, partner with disabled students from a local school and visit the bereaved when a family member dies. Additionally, students are encouraged to respond to items in the news where they can have an impact.

Oftentimes, the actions that they take will garner media attention which further teaches them the important lesson that being active really makes a difference. Public awareness of Rambam's activities, whether through email communications or media coverage, has helped associate the name of the school with excellence, activism, and leadership. This has been helpful in terms of outreach to the community for various sponsorships of our programs. Several people recently called us to volunteer to sponsor some of our guest speakers and our social activism. We expect this trend to continue and expand.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

The secret to Rambam's 29 years of success is its teachers. All the school's teachers are experts in their field, passionate about education and most importantly they totally 'buy in' to the school's culture of excellence. Rambam's teachers are truly frontline workers. The school does everything it can to support and appreciate their loyalty. The teachers appreciate our sentiments and the school's unwavering loyalty to its mission. The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed additional responsibilities on all teachers and administrators. Rambam is in effect running two full-time, active schools. Most of its students currently attend school in person. However, an ever growing minority opt into those very same classes by Zooming in. Special workshops (with different time options) were offered to all teachers to enable them and provide them with the tools to teach in person and on Zoom simultaneously. It has been very successful, and teachers willingly agreed to multitask and make this happen. Faculty members are appreciated by the sense of camaraderie they enjoy with each other and the administration and by the raises they received that they didn't ask for. They are recognized as an integral part of everything the school is about and appreciated as such.

Teacher of the Semester Awards, and other plaques, are given to deserving faculty members, in front of the student body, on an ongoing basis. Additionally, to show appreciation to all its teachers for their hard work and commitment, Rambam honors their teachers with a gift card to a local upscale restaurant for them to enjoy local outdoor dining. The school has also provided its custodian with a financial bonus. Rambam truly values its teachers and staff.

Our faculty, which serves as the engine that motivates and inspires our students, can do so and accomplish so much, because they have a sense of mission. Many have indicated how much they enjoy teaching bright, motivated students. Many, in fact, have forgone higher paying opportunities because they feel they can accomplish so much with Rambam students. Twice a semester we hold professional development workshops highlighting the increasing needs of students and keeping up with the ever-changing world of technology.

The Rambam administration and IT team are responsive and hands on. When the inevitable problems pop up, the team is always there to help. Twenty-nine years ago, Rambam was founded with the mission that it was to be "More than Just a School." We have always strived to fulfill that mandate and believe that, by and large, we have succeeded!

#### **4. School Leadership:**

During the time of COVID-19 the Rambam leadership team moved quickly and decisively to foster distance learning, maintain academic integrity, and ensure that the social-emotional needs of the students and their families were managed. The school created new lines of communications establishing numerous administrative WhatsApp groups that streamlined collaboration. New WhatsApp groups were created for students as well. Many, if not most, of the academic teams and clubs were maintained through the school's Associate Principal who created an online virtual world of clubs and teams that kept the whole school connected and provided relief from the monotony of the quarantine.

The Rambam Mesivta administrative team is diligent, sensitive, and creative, and committed to best practices and innovation, to reach each student, and guide him from where he is, and bring him into what he can become. The Rosh Mesivta (Dean) sets the overall tone and philosophy of the school and formulates policy with Rambam's Principal and Associate Principal. The administrative team meets daily and discusses both "big picture" items and particular details pertaining to the progress of individual students. The Dean also functions as the school's Hebrew Principal. He leads the students by example in various charitable causes and in pursuing social activism. During this time of Covid-19 the Dean spoke regularly with the student body via Zoom to give them words of strength and encouragement, and he met privately through Zoom with students and parents to help them emotionally and financially during these difficult times.

Both the Dean and Principal lead by example to inspire students and share with them the tools of effective leadership. The Dean helped successfully deport a Nazi war criminal living in Queens, NY through countless rallies, which resulted in widespread media coverage and political pressure. The students were mentored by the Dean as he taught them how to contact the media, get publicity, and encourage politicians to get them involved in this fight for justice. The Principal too, leads the students by example, and teaches them the importance of gratitude. Every year he organizes the adopting of a US Army Unit overseas. He inspires students who assist in sending care packages to soldiers, as well as thank you notes. The school also brings in heroes of WWII, and veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to recount the importance of commitment and sacrifice. The school always gives them thunderous applause and the veterans are presented with plaques expressing the school's appreciation for the defense of our country's freedom.

All members of the administration have open doors and open lines of communication with all students and parents. They seek to embody the ideals of the school, serving as role models, by highlighting service to their colleagues, students, and parents.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Rambam Mesivta takes as its starting point, that everyone is made in "the Image of G-d." From this framework comes an approach of sensitivity towards others, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity in all its forms. To that end, Rambam has students that come from unique backgrounds and branches of Judaism. There is a group of students at Rambam who have a Middle Eastern background whose families come from Morocco, Iran, or Syria. These students can have a special prayer group that caters to their ancestral customs. In recent years, these students were taken on a trip to the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue in Manhattan to celebrate their unique cultural heritage.

There is another group of students at Rambam who have a background where their level of Kosher certification requires additional standards and these students, coming from the Chabad-Lubavitch background, are given their own supply of milk and food when the school gives out breakfast and snacks. These students also need additional time for prayers and allowed to take the time they need to pray appropriately.

The school also has an appreciation of diversity built into its curriculum. The English Department teaches works by authors of minority backgrounds such as Lorraine Hansberry and Jamaica

Kincaid and has a unit on Feminist literature as seen through the eyes of Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, and Ayn Rand. The school also has a World Culture Club where students research different cultures around the world and share them with the school. Last year, students presented on Zoom a look at the countries of Jamaica, Mexico, and China.

In terms of addressing the issues of the day, the school's commitment to social activism is on the vanguard of the school's agenda. When the tragic shooting took place in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the school paid for a full page ad in the Florida newspaper expressing its sympathy and support for the victims of this tragedy. While Rambam is a Jewish school, it makes a point of contributing every year to non-Jewish causes. Last year's senior class, for example, donated \$1,000, which was matched by the school's principals, to No Kid Hungry, an organization that ensures kids who otherwise cannot afford it, can have food every day. The donation helped fund around 10,000 meals for disadvantaged kids around the country.

Rambam provides a safe place to learn and work for all students, where diversity is celebrated, difference is appreciated, and growth is the order of the day!



## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Rambam Mesivta is not a community school defined by region, demographics, or location, but rather it is a school that builds community. With students coming from all over the Long Island area, as well as Brooklyn and Queens, the school has always sought to keep students connected through extracurricular activities which foster social-emotional health and a sense of community. This was always true before the outbreak of the pandemic and the Rambam Extracurricular Activities program became even more paramount to the socio-emotional needs of the student body once the outbreak occurred. It was through these numerous activities, all of which took place on Zoom and WhatsApp, that allowed the students to feel connected and motivated to do well academically and not give in to despair and torpor of the COVID-19 world and distance learning.

From the moment Rambam realized it would have to engage in online schooling, the administration convened and determined it was essential to maintain a sense of normalcy and even fun, knowing the challenges students would face being at home. Of course, Rambam's mental health officials, the school psychologist, and the social workers, were deployed via Zoom to continue meeting with students, and the school offered additional social-emotional services to any student who wanted to discuss his challenges. The Extracurriculars, however, were deemed key in that they promoted school spirit; positive self-esteem/identity; academic learning; chances for leadership; and excellence in all its forms. With the guiding principle being that "When You Can't Go to the World, Invite the World to Come to You," the school launched a Rambam logo and The Matrix and Ready Player One. To be student-centered, the entire program was disseminated through the Rambam-Wide Announcements WhatsApp group as that was the preferred mode of communication for the students.

"Rambam Virtual Extracurriculars" immediately launched Early Morning Learning and Extra Judaic Learning Programs through Zoom; sending a message of normalcy and putting the idea of scholarship and Judaic learning at the top of the school's focus. Next the school launched a Best Costume Contest; a Book Chat; the Writers' Guild; and a football videogame tournament to raise money for charity. In all, the school ran close to 50 "happenings" during the time online. Additionally, one of the highlights was the students started a "Rambam Sports Talk Live" program, and had on actual guest NBA, MLB, and NFL players to discuss overcoming adversity. The Rambam Meet the Author Book Club also had on guest authors such as Dr. Alex Sternberg, who wrote a book on the Holocaust; evolutionary biologist Dr. Jay Hosler; and Nicholas Eames, a fantasy author just to name a few. The Rabbis also followed suit bringing in guest Rabbis to discuss the pulpit. The school also ran dozens of contests including a memorize Pi contest; numerous trivia Kahoots; Name That Tune; Who's Zoom Room is it?; and so much more.

At the close of the school year, Rambam gave out serious final exams, as well as its own version of the NYS Regents. Students were primed to take these exams as they were engaged throughout the school year thanks to outstanding teaching, combined with a sense of normalcy, core values, and fun, that fed their social emotional health through the Virtual Extracurricular Activities. The students were successful because though they were isolated at home, they were never lonely!

## **PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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1. Non-public school association(s): Jewish

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$19830  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$8196

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      27%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      66%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)<sup>1</sup>. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.*

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup<sup>2</sup> in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments<sup>3</sup>).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

<sup>3</sup> Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)