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העיתון "וואל סטריט זשורנאל" מודיע בפומבי, כי ההורים של החסידים ובתוכם "סאטמאר", עושים שינויים גדולים במערכת הלימודי חול שלהם, ע"י אירגון פערלס בראשות העו"ד אבי שיק, וגם שכרו קאמפאניס ומדפיסים לעשות ביכער שיהיו מתאימים לה"קאמען קאר" של הפאבליק סקולס – וכל זה כתוצאה מהתלונה שנמסרה ע"י הארגון "יאפעד". - גם מודיעים כי השלטון מעיד כי כבר רואים השינויים שעושים והם שבעים רצון מזה.

## Hasidic Parents Aim to Boost Education Standards

Move follows criticism that Yeshivas short-change students on secular studies

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**A new coalition in the Hasidic community is pledging to improve instruction for their children, following complaints that dozens of New York City yeshivas fail to provide enough secular education.**

**The coalition, Parents for Educational and Religious Liberty in Schools, or PEARLS, hired a team to create lessons in math and English that they believe will meet state standards.**

**This push comes after a group called (YAFFED) Young Advocates for Fair Education sent the city Department of Education a letter a year ago saying 39 yeshivas, mostly in Brooklyn, fell far short of state mandates.** The letter from former yeshiva students and current parents said these schools typically taught secular subjects for an average of 90 minutes a day, with boys age 13 and older being taught only Judaic studies.

Young Advocates for Fair Education demanded the city enforce a state law that requires private schools to provide an education "substantially equivalent" to public schools.

City officials say they are still investigating the complaints. The 39 yeshivas are among the roughly 260 Jewish day schools in New York City, which serve more than 100,000 students.

**Avi Schick, an attorney who represents the 39 yeshivas, also serves as adviser to the PEARLS coalition, which includes rabbis with experience in politics, social services and education. He said this week the members aim to protect parents' choice to send children to religious schools while committing to better instruction. He said the group has embarked on "a serious, comprehensive and professional effort" to improve academics.**

Naftuli Moster, executive director of Young Advocates for Fair Education, said he hoped the new coalition was sincerely striving for change but was “very skeptical.” He said he had heard about PEARLS being developed months ago as a “PR stunt...basically designed to mislead the DOE and the public” and to evade enforcement.

**Mr. Schick, of PEARLS, said the curriculum overhaul took thousands of hours of work from many professionals**, and Mr. Moster’s comments “demonstrate a greater interest in bashing Hasidim than in enhancing education.”

PEARLS has a public relations firm, Global Strategy Group, promoting its launch. **In January, the coalition hired Richard Altabe, a former headmaster of a yeshiva where students take state Regents exams and Advanced Placement courses, to create lesson plans and teaching guides. Mr. Altabe said the new curriculum will meet the Common Core standards, a set of guidelines adopted by New York and most states spelling out skills that children should master in each grade.**

Mr. Altabe said some yeshivas have been using materials that were decades old, and it was a challenge to develop materials sensitive to Hasidic families’ needs, such as respect for their modesty in dress. **He said he was working with publishers Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Sadlier-Oxford, some new lessons would be ready for fall, and some teachers would get training this summer.**

Mr. Altabe said he believed these yeshivas would have sought changes even without the past year’s scrutiny. “The microscope they have been put under has pushed them to do it on a grander scale,” he said. The attention “brought them together and as a collective they could get much more done than as individual schools.”

Chaim Jalas, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish geneticist in Borough Park whose twins attend yeshivas, supports PEARLS’ goals. “We need to make sure our kids are going to be able to grow up and have jobs and be productive citizens,” he said.

PEARLS’ representatives declined to name the schools involved in the education overhaul but say they include an array of sects, such as **Satmar, Lubavitch, Viznitz, Skver, Bobov, Belz, and Pupa**. Many families speak mostly Yiddish at home.

Young Advocates for Fair Education hasn’t released the names of the 39 schools, saying the people pushing for change didn’t want to be ostracized. City Hall and education department officials also have kept the names of schools under investigation confidential and declined to say whether their review includes visiting the yeshivas.

**Mr. Schick said representatives of the schools under scrutiny met with City Hall and education officials in May and June, and most plan to adopt the new curriculum.**

**“We have been in productive conversations with the schools for months while our investigations have continued and we are encouraged by the progress we’ve seen,”** Austin Finan, a City Hall spokesman, said in an email. **“We are developing a mutual understanding on how to implement a high-quality, Common Core-aligned curriculum as soon as possible.”**