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THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL  
of GREATER WASHINGTON

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Greetings:

Despite the serious challenges we continue to face as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is entirely appropriate to pause and give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in our personal and communal lives. We are fortunate to live in a vibrant Jewish community whose religious infrastructure includes shuls, mikvaos, supermarkets, restaurants, and of course, schools and yeshivos. We are also appreciative for the dedication and compassion of the many heroic individuals who went above and beyond the call of duty to continue to provide essential services to our community in its time of need. These include the medical professionals, proprietors and store owners, mikva attendants, rabbis, school principals, and of course teachers.

As we prepare for the start of a new school year, we have a whole host of difficult questions, all of which generate anxiety. Will our children benefit more from in person instruction with masks or from distance learning? Will the health standards that are needed to protect our children and community stifle creativity and degrade a robust learning environment? These, and so many others like these, represent legitimate concerns that each of us would likely address very differently. The one thing about which we may all agree is that, despite the herculean efforts of our educators, the school experience in this era of COVID and social distancing is likely to be diminished. As a result, many of us are wondering if the significant financial and logistical investment associated with enrolling our children in day school/yeshiva for the coming academic year is worth it.

While each family must make the appropriate decision for each one of its children, we humbly suggest that we must also look at the big picture. One important component of that picture is that the viability of our schools cannot be taken for granted. It is a simple but painful fact that if a critical mass of parents chooses not to enroll their children in a school this academic year, that school may be forced to close. Moreover, if that school were to close this year, it is far from clear that said school would be able to open next year at the operating level to which it and we have been accustomed. We feel therefore that enrollment in day school/yeshiva this year is an investment in our children's education this year and beyond. It is an investment in the future of the Greater Washington Jewish Community.

We thank the professional and lay leadership of each of the community schools for their remarkable dedication and skill in these very challenging times.

May Hashem bring each school, family, and child in our community success in all endeavors, and may Hashem grant us all a very "profitable" return on our investment.

With Love and Respect,

The Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington

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