

Caplan's pedagogical experience paves way for new post

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Students will be greeted by a new principal when they return to Merton School in Cote St. Luc this fall. Born in Sante Fe, Argentina, Rosana Caplan (née Lerman) credits her parents for instilling their daughters with pride in their Jewish heritage, while engaging fully with all communities. Caplan attended elementary and secondary schools in Argentina.

At 20, Caplan made aliyah, enrolled in the ulpan program, engaged in preparatory studies at Hebrew University and went on to attain a degree in special education at Levinsky College in Tel Aviv.

"I always wanted to be a teacher," Caplan said. "I love learning. There is something about the look in a student's eyes that says 'I got it' when they understand, and that's exciting. I knew children would always keep me learning."

While at Hebrew University, she met her husband Eric Caplan. The couple moved to Montreal so that Eric could pursue a PhD at McGill University. Eager to teach in Quebec, Rosana enrolled in McGill's

bachelor program for certified teachers. Caplan taught at JPPS in the early '90s before accepting a teaching position at Akiva. During the period at Akiva, she attained her master's in educational leadership at McGill. In 2012, she was elected president of Congregation Dorshei Emet.

Caplan says she is able to juggle career and family commitments because she shares the same values as her husband, a professor of Jewish studies and education at McGill. "I can always count on his support," she said. The couple has two children.

"While I was a Jewish studies teacher, I worked at incorporating the best practices from general education into the Jewish studies realm, and I was always engaged with the larger issues of educational policy and practice."

Caplan was awarded a Covenant Fellowship for her endeavours. "That is why I went on to study educational leadership, well before I had any intention of becoming a principal."

Caplan envisions school as a community where parents, teachers and administrators develop a partnership that addresses the needs of children, and



Rosana Caplan

implements the best educational practices to help youngsters learn in a healthy, happy and safe environment. These components are essential for learning, she explains.

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"In the four years I worked at Roslyn, [an EMSB elementary school], I had three different principals. Their educational visions differed and so I observed many ways to do the job."

Roslyn and Merton both have strong Home and School Associations and outstanding teachers, Caplan noted. Both schools are enhanced with a multicultural component. Merton's population is more homogeneous with a higher percentage of Jewish students. Caplan visited Merton on a recent PED day. She regards Raizel Candib (Merton's outgoing principal) as an awesome mentor. "She opened the doors of the school to me." Candib retired at the end of June after 47 years in the field of education. ■