Local principal attends Harvard seminar for day school leaders

August 20, 2015

Robert Smolen, principal of the Academies at Gerrard Berman Day School in Oakland, participated in “Leadership: An Evolving Vision,” a seminar for emerging leaders at the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Principals’ Center. The weeklong institute is part of a larger yearlong program that helps day school leaders to improve their schools, with a special focus on their Jewish mission and vision. It is sponsored and facilitated by the New York-based Avi Chai Foundation.

The foundation sponsored Mr. Smolen and 10 other eligible day school principals from around the country. Participants attended lectures and discussion groups led by Harvard faculty, educational consultants, and school practitioners. The program focuses on the challenges facing experienced school leaders and seeks to re-inspire them to lead instructional improvements at their schools. Rigorous study is combined with writing, reflection, and peer interaction, allowing participants to identify priorities and share ideas and solutions.

“It was a wonderful experience for me,” Mr. Smolen said. “At Harvard, I attended lively, thought-provoking sessions exploring the components of what makes a good school. We learned how to enhance the quality of the school experience for everyone, students, teachers and administrators alike.”