



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
Talmud Torah of Minneapolis
Market Research
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Talmud Torah of Minneapolis
Heilicher Education Center
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- **GOALS FOR JEWISH EDUCATION:** Families desire for their children to have a strong Jewish identity, to learn about Jewish practices and values to take into their adult life as an engaged Jewish citizen of the world.
- **TALMUD TORAH'S STRENGTHS:** Families want Talmud Torah to be the gateway for Jewish identity building, Jewish friendships and a connection to the broader Jewish community, and identify these as Talmud Torah's strengths, along with Mekhina, Aleph and High School programming. Talmud Torah may want to consider a branding and identity redesign to reflect these strengths and community values.
- **HEBREW INSTRUCTION:** Families do not want Talmud Torah to be the source for Bar/Bat Mitzvah learning. Families do desire the emphasis at the Elementary level to be on Hebrew reading instruction and mastery.
- **COST:** About half responded tuition at Talmud Torah is too expensive. About 75% stated the value for the tuition dollar is average to fair. However, when coupled with the cost of Synagogue programming and Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring, the cost becomes a significant stressor.
- **SCHEDULE:** An overwhelming majority prefer two days of Jewish education per week, with about a two hour learning session. Parents want no more than three days per week between Talmud Torah and synagogue commitments. Comments on this topic state a need for balance between Jewish and secular life, as well as a desperate need for family time.
- **LOCATION:** Current location of Talmud Torah is an agreeable location and facility for over 2/3 of respondents. Transportation to the facility was not indicated as a major barrier.
- **ADMINISTRATION:** Administration is responsive to parent concerns, student needs and supportive of faculty. The two areas perceived as needing improvement are fiscal management and functioning in an organized and pro-active fashion.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Communication from Talmud Torah is strong, particularly the This Week at Talmud Torah emails. Improvement is needed in forward thinking communication, and not making global background knowledge assumptions. Families prefer communication one to two times per month.

Affiliated with the
Association for Jewish Education
Service of North America

A beneficiary of the
Minneapolis Jewish Federation

"Talmud Torah's mission is to fulfill the mitzvah of teaching Torah and our people's heritage to our students and families so that they and generations to come will lead committed Jewish lives."

שבת תורה יום יום
CELEBRATE TORAH EVERY DAY

- **TEACHERS:** Teachers are regarded as knowledgeable professionals who are excited to be teaching and engaged with students. They are perceived as needing improvement in classroom management, curriculum innovations, use of technology in the classroom, and being responsive to a variety of learning needs. There is a significant need for recruitment strategies for new, younger teachers.
- **CURRICULUM:** The curriculum at Talmud Torah is lacking depth and well-organized outcomes by grade level. Parents and faculty desire to focus on reading and writing Hebrew, Jewish holidays and customs, Israel, and current world events, and delete the “fluff” and extraneous programs. Teens desire more technology and relevance in their lives. Homework is not a priority.
- **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** Families, parents and teens want more meaningful ways to participate in Talmud Torah through smaller, more intimate opportunities such as grade level Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations and classroom involvement.
- **SYNAGOGUE COLLABORATION:** While families do not want Talmud Torah to be the source of Bar/Bat Mitzvah education, they do want collaboration and coordination with the synagogues. They also desire coordination for programs and special events. Families are also seeking from their clergy, a message that Talmud Torah is a strong, viable option for Jewish education.
- **CONNECTION TO CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM:** Many families are sending their children to Talmud Torah based on a requirement from the local Conservative synagogues. Families desire a connection to the Conservative movement through Talmud Torah, but it is not reported as a strength, mostly due to a perceived lack of support from the synagogue clergy. In the overall importance of their child’s Jewish education, a connection to the Conservative movement was selected as the least important value.
- **BUILDING JEWISH IDENTITY:** With a primary goal of building life-long Jewish identity, families suggest the following as a “toolbox” to achieve this goal for their children: social opportunities, Hebrew reading mastery, customs and holidays, Israel past and present, current events and relevance to their child’s life today.
- **JEWISH EDUCATION EXCELLENCE:** Parents desire change. They want to be heard and want Talmud Torah and their child’s Jewish education to be the best it can be. They desire a “Jewish Education Center of Excellence” which combines the schedules, curriculum, budget and goals of a PreK – high school Jewish education model.