



Jewish High School Education Task Force Report

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Background	2
3.	Process.....	2
	Research.....	3
	Consultation.....	3
4.	Why a Jewish High School?.....	3
5.	Pre-Conditions of Success for a Jewish High School.....	5
6.	Key Findings	7
	One-on-One Interviews	7
	Online Survey.....	8
7.	Recommendations of Task Force.....	11
	Education & Student Experience	11
	Management.....	11
	Recruitment	12
	Finances	12
	Role of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa	12
8.	Conclusion	13

1. Introduction

The Jewish High School Education Task Force's mandate is clear: is there a model for a Jewish high school in Ottawa that would attract students and be sustainable in the long-term? Through a seven-month process of research and consultation, the task force learned that 79% of elementary school parents polled are open on some level to sending their children to a Jewish high school. What mattered most to them was outstanding academics, preparation for university, and a spectrum of Jewish education consistent with their own Jewish values. A minimum class size of 10 students would be required with an aim of 14-17 students, and parents are willing to pay tuition if they see value, but are also looking to keep tuition reasonable. It has been demonstrated that the more formal Jewish education a child receives the better, and if there is a will, a group of dedicated parents and community members could build the model recommended in this report, which would be supported by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. This report outlines the best practices and a framework for what would make a compelling case for students and parents within the Ottawa Jewish community to want to attend a Jewish high school.

2. Background

Yitzhak Rabin High School opened in 1995 as an independent school, and amalgamated with Hillel Academy in 2009 to become the Ottawa Jewish Community School. It was announced in February 2015 that the high school division of the Ottawa Jewish Community School would be closing.

Following this announcement, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa launched a Jewish High School Education Task Force in March 2015. The mandate of this task force was to determine if there is a sustainable Jewish high school model that appeals to students and meets the needs of Jewish families in Ottawa.

The task force is comprised of a diverse group of past Yitzhak Rabin High School parents, parents with elementary school children, community leaders, philanthropists, a high school student and a representative from the Ottawa Jewish Community School board. The chair of the task force is Ron Prehogan and it is professionally staffed by Bram Bregman, Vice President of Community Building for the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. The members of the task force are Brian Aarenau, Orly Aaron, Barbara Crook, Jonathan Freedman, Noa Kardash, Michael Polowin, Jared Greenberg and Lewis Retik. Additional staff support from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa is provided by Benita Siemiatycki, and through an allocation of funds from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, the task force acquired the services of Michael Miloff, a Toronto-based consultant with substantial experience consulting to Jewish formal and informal educational institutions and the design of parent and stakeholder consultation processes.

3. Process

The task force decided on a process at the outset of its mandate to reach its goal of finding a Jewish high school model that could work for Ottawa. There were two major thrusts to the process: research and consultation.

Research

The first item of business for the task force was to better understand the origins of Yitzhak Rabin High School in Ottawa, as well as look at best practices from other communities across North America. To that end:

- The task force met with past leaders of Yitzhak Rabin High School, which included Neima Langner and Paul Bregman (founders of Yitzhak Rabin High School in 1995), Rabbi Howard Finkelstein (who served as the Judaic Principal from 1995 to 2015), Sabina Wasserlauf (chair during the amalgamation with Hillel Academy in 2009), and Lisa Miller (chair of Ottawa Jewish Community School from 2009-2014).
- The task force wanted to better understand the successful Jewish high school models in Winnipeg and Vancouver, which are Canadian Jewish communities of similar size to Ottawa. The task force held a Skype session with Claudio Grubner, one of the founders of King David High School in Vancouver, and a conference call with Rory Paul, Head of School for Gray Academy in Winnipeg.
- To better learn trends and emerging models across North America, the task force Skyped with Dr. Daniel Held, Executive Director of the Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, as well as with Dr. Marc Kramer, Co-Executive Director of RAVSAK: The Jewish Community Day School Network.

Following these sessions, the task force members each took upon themselves different areas of focus to further research themselves and report back to the group (internet-based learning, extra-curricular activities, marketing, etc.).

Consultation

The task force worked with Toronto-based consultant Michael Miloff on how best to design consultations that would yield meaningful results. There were two major consultations undertaken that form the basis of the recommendations in this report. The first were 10 one-on-one phone or in-person interviews of parents with children who are entering high school in September 2016, and have expressed some interest in sending their child to a Jewish high school. The rationale was to begin with the core group of parents to understand their needs and desires. The second consultation was an online survey open to all Jewish parents with students in Grades 1 to 8, which was sent to every Jewish day and supplemental school to distribute, as well as to the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's email list. There were 106 responses to this online survey, which was designed to better understand the market and consumer preferences for a potential new Jewish high school.

4. Why a Jewish High School?

This question breaks down into two parts: (1) Why is it important to have a thriving Jewish day school in the community? (2) Why is it important to have a Jewish high school specifically?

Both of these questions are answered in “Greenbook: A Guide to Intelligent Giving; Volume 1 January 2014; Jewish Day School Financial Sustainability and Affordability” written by Daniel Held and funded by the Avi Chai Foundation. The exact text of the report is (page 1):

Jewish day schools are the gold standard in Jewish education. No other form of Jewish education provides the robust training in Jewish values, imparts the level of knowledge, or instills the same level of Jewish commitment. Nearly a quarter century of studies have time and again demonstrated the profound impact of a day school education on students’ Jewish knowledge and identity. Some examples:

- *“Jewish Involvement of the Baby Boom Generation” by Mordechai Rimor and Elihu Katz (1993) analyzes data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey to demonstrate a positive correlation between the number of years of Jewish schooling and Jewish involvement later in life. The study concludes, “Jewish day schools are the best vehicle for implementing Jewish involvement and are the only type of Jewish education that stands against the very rapidly growing rate of intermarriage.”*
- *The Power of Jewish Education (1994) by noted sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset concludes: “The longer and more intensive the Jewish training, the more likely people are to be committed to and practice Judaism.”*
- *“When They Are Grown Up They Will Not Depart: Jewish Education and the Jewish Behavior of American Adults,” by Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein (1993) correlates marriage behavior with the intensity of Jewish education. The authors find that 80 percent of adults with 6 or more years of day school training are married to other Jews—a statistic that stands day school graduates in stark comparison to their non-day school peers. The authors also note that Jewish learning in day schools extends beyond instructional hours: “The Jewish environment supplied by years of day school may have more effect than mere classroom time on ritual behavior.”*
- *“The Impact of Childhood Jewish Education on Adults’ Jewish Identity: Schooling, Israel Travel, Camping and Youth Groups” by Steve M. Cohen and Lawrence Kotler-Berkowitz (2004) analyzed in-marriage rates, prevalence of Jewish friends, ritual observance, synagogue membership, self-perception of being Jewish, and attachment to Israel. In each of these measures, they report, “day school alumni outscore supplementary school alumni, who in turn outrank Sunday school graduates.” To take an illustrative example, with all other things being equal, a projected 36 percent of those with no Jewish schooling claim that being Jewish is very important to them, as contrasted with fully 64 percent of those with 7 or more years of day school.”*
- *“What Difference Does Day School Make? The Impact of Day School: A Comparative Analysis of Jewish College Studies” by Fern Chertok, Leonard Saxe, et al, (2007) was the first national study exploring the near-term effects of a Jewish day school education. By comparing day school graduates to their non-day school peers, the study offers flattering conclusions for day schools in the areas of academic preparation in high school, academic performance in college, response to individual learning needs, integration into college life, Jewish campus involvement, and civic responsibility. The day school emphasis on Jewish values appears to inoculate and protect graduates from a wide range of dysfunctional behaviors so prevalent on college campuses today.”*

In addition to a day school's impact on the individual, other studies confirm the schools' influence on the community at large. Leadership roles in the Jewish community are disproportionately held by day school graduates. "Generation of Change: How Leaders in their Twenties and Thirties are Reshaping American Jewish Life," by Jack Wertheimer (2010) found that "nearly 40 percent of young Jewish leaders have attended day school, even though under 11 percent of our survey sample consisted of Orthodox Jews, suggesting that non-Orthodox young leaders benefited disproportionately from day school education."

The list of compelling arguments for Jewish day schools goes on and on. For more perspectives on the issue, see the Spring 2008 HaYidion (Ravsak's journal of Jewish education) entitled, "Making the Case for Jewish Day School."

The excerpt from the report dealing with the importance of the Jewish high school in particular is found on page 67 as follows:

Elena Weinstein, a lay leader from Westchester, NY, and Allen Selis, Head of School of the Solomon Schechter Day School of St. Louis, offer new thinking on day school affordability by suggesting that families with limited budgets to devote to Jewish day school education should invest most heavily in the middle and high school years. "This is the developmental period when social issues like dating and relationships take center stage, but also a period in which students are most prepared for serious and thoughtful intellectual discussions." To this end, they envision a return to robust after-school Jewish programs for grades K-5, followed by intensive investment in day school education for grades 6-12. The learning would center around three essential questions:

- *What is unique about my identity?*
- *Which languages, rituals and behavioral norms define me?*
- *What knowledge and skills most demonstrate my belonging to a community?*

While Jewish education has been demonstrated to be the most effective method of instilling Jewish identity, other Jewish experiences such as camping, youth groups, and Israel travel have been proven to make a lasting impact as well ("The Impact of Childhood Jewish Education on Adults' Jewish Identity: Schooling, Israel Travel, Camping and Youth Groups" by Steve M. Cohen and Lawrence Kotler-Berkowitz, 2004).

5. Pre-Conditions of Success for a Jewish High School

Based on all of the research undertaken by the task force, there were patterns and themes that emerged that all effective Jewish high schools embody. **These are elements that thriving Jewish high schools across North America possess, and these conditions need to be present in Ottawa for a Jewish high school to be successful.** Below is a summary of these best practices, which are all equally important and required:

- ✓ **Parent & Grassroots Champions:** There must be a small group of dedicated and capable individuals who are prepared to take ownership and full responsibility to start a high school. These leaders are driven by the desire to provide the children of the community with an outstanding

experience, and are prepared to go to great lengths and put in countless hours to ensure the success of the school.

- ✓ **Quality Secular & Judaic Academics:** Parents demand a quality secular education that will prepare their children for university, and a Jewish education that reflects their personal values.
- ✓ **Philanthropist & Community Leadership Champions:** There must be community leaders who are prepared to do what it takes to ensure strong community support for the high school. This includes the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Rabbis, philanthropists and other stakeholders who value Jewish education. As an example, King David High School in Vancouver was originally a small high school on the verge of closing until a group of dedicated leaders and philanthropists came together with a ten-year plan to revitalize Jewish high school education and make it a priority in the community (the high school now has approximately 200 students).
- ✓ **Dynamic Head of School:** There must be strong and dynamic professional leadership. This is key in instilling confidence with the student body, the parent body, donors, feeder schools, and the community at-large. Effective community organizations are always led by a dynamic individual who takes ownership of the organization's success, and oversees the hiring and training of outstanding educational staff.
- ✓ **Independent Board of Directors:** The Head of School must be overseen by an independent board of directors with a strong governance structure in which the role of the board is clearly delineated and separate from the role of the administrator. It must be a working board comprised of individuals who have expertise in diverse areas that would benefit the school.
- ✓ **Jewish Mission:** There must be a clear and unwavering mission of the school to inculcate its students with strong Jewish values. An apt saying among strong Jewish school leaders is that "it must be a Jewish school as opposed to a school for Jewish children".
- ✓ **Robust Fundraising:** The cost per student of running a Jewish high school exceeds that of a Jewish elementary school. Thriving Jewish day schools have varied fundraising mechanisms and a range of stakeholders actively involved with fundraising (parents, administrators, board members, key donors, etc.).
- ✓ **Tuition Support:** The cost per student to run a Jewish high school is high, and therefore parents need tuition relief that is predictable and clearly outlined. Traditionally, lower income families readily qualified for scholarships, and affluent families can afford the high tuition. However, the majority of Jewish families in Ottawa are "middle of the road" families earning between \$100,000 and \$250,000 per year of household income (National Household Survey, 2011). These families, along with lower-income families, need to know that Jewish education will remain affordable, and be able to pay reduced rates without feeling they are on scholarship.
- ✓ **Seamless Transition from Elementary to High School:** Most successful Jewish high schools are either part of a K-12 school, or have very strong relationships with local Jewish elementary schools. Recruitment for a Jewish high school begins in kindergarten, and the principals of Jewish elementary schools are key stakeholders to promote Jewish high school education. As an example, Gray Academy in Winnipeg has been a K-12 school since 1959 and as such it is part of that community's culture for parents to send their children to Jewish school from K-12 (in the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 220 high school students of the 510 total students in K-12).
- ✓ **Socialization & Extra-Curricular Activities:** High school students are looking to be with their friends, and therefore ensuring a critical mass of students is vital. Teenagers are also seeking new experiences with friends, and creating impactful trips, clubs, activities, volunteering opportunities,

and connections with other people are crucial to ensure students are happy and proud to be a part of the school.

In February 2013, the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, in conjunction with the research firm Measuring Success, published a report entitled “Learning from Parent Voices” on what drives Jewish day school enrolment. The report was based on interviews with 25,000 North American Jewish parents and showed the primary factor weighed by parents in choosing to enroll their children in Jewish elementary and high schools was “perceived quality”. With 75% of parent inquiries at Jewish day schools stemming from word-of-mouth, a parent’s willingness to recommend the school is its most powerful marketing tool to boost enrollment.

The results of this largest-ever study revealed three commonalities among all Jewish school types that lead to parental satisfaction and subsequently choosing to recommend the school to others.

Firstly, parents want their Jewish schools to prepare their children for the rigours of university academics. The research showed that parents were less concerned with individual academic subjects, and more with the school’s ability to open doors and options as their children transition through their educational career.

Secondly, parents want schools to instill in their children a Jewish identity that aligns with their own values of Judaism. The research showed that a “positive perception of the school’s support of Jewish development is more than *five times* as powerful as a positive perception of science, math or other significant subject areas.”

Thirdly, parents want customer service and communication. When a parent has a concern, they expect a quick reply. Schools that are attentive and responsive to the needs of parents, and demonstrate it in concrete measures, are most likely to be recommended to friends.

A separate study by Measuring Success in 2010, entitled “Full Steam Ahead: Part 2. Cutting-Edge Research and Opinion for Excellent Independent Schools” found that among 200 Jewish and non-Jewish private schools, there was simply no relationship between increasing tuition and declining enrollment. Tuition is not a predictor of enrollment - perceived quality is the driving factor in increasing day school enrollment.

6. Key Findings

This section will summarize the findings of the one-on-one interviews and online survey.

One-on-One Interviews

Ten one-on-one interviews were conducted in June and July 2015 with parents who have a child entering high school in September 2016 and were considered most open to considering sending this child to a Jewish high school (see Appendix A for the questions asked). The results of these ten interviews showed:

- Parents generally wanted a minimum of 10 students per class and want to be with their friends and a diverse cross-section of other students.

- The school must be socially desirable for students and parents.
- Quality of education and university preparation are crucial – not negotiable – in a future Jewish high school.
- Parents put high value on Jewish education, including ethics, traditions, history, Israel, etc. That’s why they send their children to a Jewish school.
- Cost is a big factor, however, these parents generally said they are willing to pay if they see value. This is more concerning for parents with multiple children. Most parents said they would pay the same or slightly more than their current tuition in Jewish elementary school.
- The students themselves must want to go to the school - parents will not force their children to attend a high school they do not want to go to.
- Location of high school did not matter, as long as it was fairly central.
- Most families were considering Sir Robert Borden High School if there was not a Jewish high school, as it has a significant Jewish student population, is well located for many in the Jewish community, and offers a good education.
- Common concerns among parents were the stability of a future high school, the ability to attract students consistently, ensuring their child could finish all four years of high school if they start Grade 9 in a Jewish school, and having a critical mass of students.
- The non-negotiable elements of a high school for these parents were high quality education in all subjects, professional faculty, university preparation, inclusive and representative of community, acceptable class and school size, positive social environment, and a strong Jewish environment, content and education.
- Technology and French immersion were not considered a top priority among these parents.
- Parents felt there should be a Jewish high school, even if they were uncertain if their child would attend. It is perceived as a plus for the community, and students who wish to continue Jewish education should have a place to go.

Online Survey

The online survey reached a wide range of families and provided rich data into the preferences and decision factors of future potential parents for a Jewish high school. The following is background information on the families who completed the survey:

- 106 families participated in the survey, who together currently have 177 children in Grades 1 to 8.
- The survey asked parents to answer the questions with respect to their oldest child currently in Grades 1-8, and therefore the first to enter high school. Of these oldest children, 59% were female and 41% were male. 39% are currently in Grades 1 to 4, and 61% are currently in Grades 5-8.
- Regarding which school their children attend, 64% attend the Ottawa Jewish Community School, 27% attend public school, 7% attend Orthodox Jewish elementary schools, and 2% attend private schools.
- Regarding Jewish affiliation, 38% identified themselves as Conservative, 24% as Just Jewish, 23% as Orthodox, 7% as Reform, and 7% as Egalitarian.

Parents were asked a series of questions to understand what matters to them when deciding on which high school to send their children to, and their willingness to consider a Jewish high school. The 106 responses were looked at all together, and were also broken down into sub-groups to see if answers varied among backgrounds of respondents. The sub-groups chosen were: public school parents only, OJCS parents only, students currently in Grades 5-8 only, and families who expressed an openness to sending their children to a Jewish high school (this sub-group eliminated families who said they definitely plan, or definitely plan to not, send their children to a Jewish high school should one open). For the full list of questions, please see Appendix B. For a breakdown of answers by sub-group, please see Appendix C. For comments from respondents, please see Appendix D.

Below is a summary of the responses:

- The overall top three factors in a parent’s decision as to what high school their child would attend are:
 - Quality of teaching
 - Quality of secular academic education
 - Ability to prepare students for university

These were the only three choices that had average scores between “Very Important” and “Extremely Important”. Every sub-group chose these factors as their top three, with some having a different order. Specialized programs were not key factors for parents in deciding which school to send their children to.

- When asked to rank the top four program streams in terms of their influence on their decision to send their child to a Jewish high school, the top four responses were:
 - Math and science focus
 - General focus on outstanding academics
 - Jewish education in line with my own personal Jewish values
 - Close scores for fourth: social science focus, International Baccalaureate program, extended French/French immersion, leadership development

Every sub-group chose these factors as their top choices, with some having a different order. Public school parents had the same top two as above, but placed “social science focus” as number three. However, “Jewish education in line with my own personal Jewish values” was tied for fourth with “creative or performing arts focus” and “social action/volunteerism focus” for these public school parents.

- The top three extra-curricular activities that parents said would draw their child’s interest are:
 - Tied for first: Sports
 - Tied for first: Technology
 - Music

A close fourth is Interest Clubs (chess, environment, politics, etc.). Every sub-group chose the above activities as their top choices. Public school parents did not list sports in their top 3 choices.

- The overall results for the minimum class size that would be acceptable for a parent to consider sending their child to a Jewish high school are:
 - 10% said under 7
 - 10% said 7-9
 - 27% said 10-13
 - 23% said 14-17
 - 15% said 18-20
 - 14% said more than 20

Accounting for rounding, 47% of all respondents indicated that 10-13 students per class (or less) would be acceptable to them, and 71% of all respondents indicated that 14-17 students per class (or less) would be acceptable to them. There were no significant differences between sub-groups.

- Parents were asked to rank the most important aspects of Jewish education that they would like to see in a new Jewish high school. The possible answers were: Hebrew; Jewish ethics; Israel; Jewish history; Advocacy; Jewish Holidays; Torah; Talmud; Text-based study; Jewish philosophy; Jewish leadership; and Experiential Judaism. Every Jewish topic listed above scored, on average, on the scale between “important” and “very important”, except for Talmud and text-based study which scored slightly below “important”. There were no significant differences between sub-groups.
- Parents were asked: In considering sending your child to a quality Jewish high school, what is the highest tuition fees you would be willing to pay? The overall results were:
 - 47% said \$8-\$10K
 - 17% said \$10-\$12K
 - 18% said \$12-\$15K
 - 14% said \$15-\$20K
 - 2% said over \$20K

The only sub-groups that showed slight difference were between public school parents and Jewish day school parents. Public school parents slightly leaned towards lower tuition, and Jewish day school parents slightly leaned towards higher tuition amounts.

- The survey asked two important questions: at the start of the survey, parents were asked their current thinking as to the likelihood of their oldest child attending a Jewish high school. This was asked at the beginning to assess the current perception of a Jewish high school. At the end of the survey, after inquiring about what matters to them in a high school education for their children, parents were asked whether they would be more likely to send their child to a Jewish high school if it offered almost all of the preferences indicated in the prior questions. At the beginning of the survey, only 30% of respondents indicated that they are likely, quite likely or almost certain to send their children to a Jewish high school. When asked at the end of the survey if they would be more likely to consider sending their child to a Jewish high school that offered their preferences, 72% said they are (25% said “much more likely”, 19% said “more

likely”, and 29% said “somewhat more likely”). Additionally, 7% of parents indicated they plan to send their child to a Jewish high school, and 21% said they do not plan to send their child to a Jewish high school.

7. Recommendations of Task Force

The Jewish High School Education Task Force holds that with the pre-conditions of success listed in Section 5 in place, and with the recommendations below, Ottawa would have all the elements to establish a sustainable Jewish community high school.

Based on the research and consultation undertaken, the Jewish High School Education Task Force recommends that every one of the following are the required components of a Jewish high school model that would make one in Ottawa attractive to students and sustainable in the long-term:

Education & Student Experience

- ✓ What matters the most to parents is outstanding teachers, academics, and university preparation. It is recommended that the high school be accredited in its general studies program so that it has independent verification of its outstanding academics for parents and students to see, and to differentiate itself from the public school system (one example is for the school to become an International Baccalaureate school, or to be accredited by Canadian Accredited Independent Schools like Gray Academy in Winnipeg). Math and science seem to be a higher priority for parents. The focus of the school must be to prepare its students for university and life afterwards.
- ✓ Of equal importance, the high school must offer a variety of Jewish studies that adapt to the families enrolled in the school, which includes a vibrant and accessible Hebrew program. Parents weighted every Jewish subject relatively equally important, and therefore the Judaic curriculum must be all encompassing. Course material must be relevant, interactive, and have application to the life of a 21st century Jewish teenager living in Ottawa.
- ✓ The data suggests that parents place a preference for extra-curricular activities in technology, sports and music. These should be contingent on a minimum enrollment per activity, and charged to the parents to keep school costs down. As these preferences change, the high school must brand itself as being able to offer whichever extra-curricular activities are of interest to its current student body. If feasible, extra-curricular activities offered by the school should connect with existing programs within the city for greater socialization.
- ✓ The school administration should implement appropriate classroom technologies in line with other schools, however, there is not enough evaluation of “blended learning” regarding both costs savings and student educational outcomes to recommend this as part of a new Jewish high school in Ottawa.

Management

- ✓ A core group of parents and grassroots community members must take immediate ownership of starting the school.

- ✓ The high school must have an outstanding Head of School, who will take ownership of the operations of the school, its secular and Jewish academics, recruitment, and relationships with key external and internal stakeholders. Hiring an executive search firm, with a speciality in Jewish day schools, is recommended. In general, the latest time to begin a Head of School search is the November prior to the academic year in which the candidate will begin his or her position. There could be an interim Head of School in Year 1 to get the school up and running.

Recruitment

- ✓ It is recommended that the high school must attract a bare minimum of 10 students per year, but should aim for 14-17 students per year. If a high school opens in 2016-2017, the Grade 9 class can have 10 students (this is based on the interviews conducted with this specific group of parents).
- ✓ Year 1 of the school should start with only a Grade 9 class, and then build up the grades in each successive year. The task force only recommends starting Year 1 with older grades if there are a minimum of 10 students committed to that year to ensure proper socialization, cost effectiveness, and projecting an image of having acceptable class sizes.
- ✓ While the majority of students typically come from Jewish elementary day schools, the high school must be able to attract some students from the public school system, and have a program to catch them up with those who graduated from a Jewish elementary day school. This would include the ability to enter into a Hebrew program in high school with no background.

Finances

- ✓ While parents are willing to pay more tuition if they see the value, parents are conscious of the costs, making affordability a strong factor. The high school should keep costs down and setup fundraising mechanisms to ensure tuition can be affordable for all families, including both low-income families and families that are in the “middle of the road” with household incomes between \$100,000 and \$250,000 per year.
- ✓ To keep costs down, the high school should offer the most common and core courses mandated by the Ministry of Education, and only offer specialty courses in math and science. All other specialty courses would require a minimum number of students to run such that it is break-even, or students should be encouraged to take these highly specialized courses independently, in night school, or in summer school.
- ✓ It is recommended that the high school be located on the Jewish community campus to keep costs down.

Role of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa

- ✓ The Jewish Federation of Ottawa strongly supports Jewish education, and would support a group of community members who would embark on a mission to start a Jewish high school based on the findings of this report.

- ✓ This would include funding the school in line with the day school funding formula, as well as other forms of support and assistance that would benefit the group of community members who start the school. For example, this may include helping to prepare a budget, facilitation at selective meetings, advice on fundraising, conducting further analysis of the task force's online survey, assisting to design additional consultations, and serving as a resource and thinking partner on the various issues that will arise.
- ✓ The high school must have strong working relationships within the community including with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, leaders of local Jewish elementary day and supplementary schools, Rabbis, and other key stakeholders, and involve them in the building of the school. The Jewish Federation of Ottawa must ensure that the holistic Jewish education system is strong and working together to better the community as a whole.
- ✓ The long-term success of a Jewish community high school in Ottawa is largely dependent on the success of the "feeder schools" in the community attracting and retaining a critical mass of Jewish children. "Feeder schools" include not only the Jewish elementary day and supplementary schools, but also the Jewish daycare and pre-school programs offered in the community. Once a child is introduced into the "Jewish system", there is a far better chance of retaining that child because of the powerful effect on the parents seeing their children learning about Jewish holidays, customs and traditions and socializing with other Jewish children. In those cases, it can be very hard for a parent to decide to take the child out of the "Jewish system". Without success at that entry level, the recruitment process at the kindergarten level and beyond becomes infinitely more difficult. As a result, the task force believes that it is hugely important for the community not only to focus on the high school, but also on ways to encourage entry and retention into the "Jewish system" at the earliest possible ages. This must be a task for the community of the highest priority.

8. Conclusion

This report has outlined a model for a Jewish high school in Ottawa that would be attractive to students and parents based on the research and consultation of the Jewish High School Education Task Force. Ultimately, a successful school will be one that students, parents, donors, and others want to be a part of. However, the real work lies ahead. The parents and other grassroots leaders who wish to start a high school must come together and begin building a school based on the pre-conditions of success and the required components of a Jewish high school model detailed in this task force report. This would include crafting an action plan, proposed budget, fundraising strategy, and conducting further consultation with parents and students. The Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Jewish High School Education Task Force will organize an initial meeting of parents and grassroots leaders who have expressed interest in starting a new Jewish high school. Following this meeting, these individuals must assume responsibility and form their own committee. These committed individuals, with the support of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, will shape the future of Jewish high school education in Ottawa.