



Education Committee report

The Education Committee is dedicated to strengthening, enriching, and promoting the quality of Jewish education in our community; and will ensure its continuity by providing leadership and supporting a sustainable system of quality programs.

Supporting Jewish Day Schools in Hamilton

Federation's Education Committee sought out and sponsored membership for our day schools in Prizmah Education Network for the 2020-2021 year. In light of the Covid19 pandemic, the Education Committee facilitated opportunities for schools to apply for funding support to offset costs. Schools are in the process of applying for funds (provided by the Jewish Communal Response and Impact Fund (JCRIF) and administered by Prizmah). Our schools were able to apply for grants to offset tuition and meet tuition assistance needs of families. Via their Prizmah membership, Hamilton Jewish day schools have also been able to participate in online seminars tailored to the needs of small schools in North America as well as engage in sessions exploring pedagogies for distance and blended learning. Schools are also able to check in with Prizmah advisors weekly with regard to updating Educational Technology and sharing online resources necessary for the post-Covid teaching landscape.

In September, the Education Committee coordinated and funded a consultation with Prizmah, with their Senior Director of Field Advancement Prizmah, Amy Wasser. Amy consulted with school leadership, parents, community members, the Education Committee and members of HJM. Amy shared a list of immediate and actionable task for the schools which was shared with Federation and the schools. Tasks and future work include creating a strong online media presence for both schools and ensuring that the school facilities reflect the dynamic and vibrant nature of the school itself (painting, updating etc.). Clear strategic planning, hiring and evaluating new staff was also highlighted as an ongoing priority for our schools.

Recognizing Teaching Excellence

The Education Committee facilitated the 2020 Hamilton Jewish Federation Award for Excellence in Education. The award allows our community to recognize our teachers, many of whom were able to shift from in person classroom to online teaching virtually overnight. Now more than ever, teachers are making a difference in the lives of our community. The committee is pleased to be able to celebrate the efforts of our outstanding educators who excel in innovative ways of teaching in a time of rapidly changing expectations and needs.

Expanding Jewish Education Options

As per Federation's Strategic Plan, the Education Committee sought to support current Jewish Education initiatives and plan towards new opportunities which will:

- ensure diverse opportunities for Jewish education and identity building;
- ensure a variety of informal Jewish education experiences that build and strengthen the knowledge and participation of the community

The Education Committee held extensive consultations with schools offering non-denominational high school credit courses with Jewish content. The Committee also hosted open houses for the community and community leaders to explore possible course offerings. It was determined that there was not sufficient interest in new course option(s) for this year. Community leaders and the Education Committee have agreed to review alternative options for the 2020/2021 school year.

Alice Mendelson, Chair