

# THE TALMUD TORAH OF MINNEAPOLIS

## Strategic Plan | 2015–2018 (approved 3.11.15)

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### Mission

The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, the school of the Adath Jeshurun and Beth El congregations, engages students of all backgrounds in educational experiences that provide a foundation and the lifelong tools for living an intentionally Jewish life.

### Vision

To be a thriving school that offers a curriculum relevant to our students and their families, that inspires a commitment to Torah and Jewish living, and that builds a deep connection with the land of Israel and all Jewish people.

### Statement of Distinction

The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis offers a rigorous education that builds knowledge of Judaism and its traditional practices based on the teachings and egalitarian, pluralistic principles of the Conservative movement. As a school co-led by two distinct Conservative congregations, Talmud Torah offers students a place to make deep connections with other young people from different Jewish backgrounds who come together for profoundly valuable educational and social experiences that build pride and self-confidence in being Jewish.

### 2015–2018 Strategic Goals

1. Develop and clearly communicate a meaningful, relevant value proposition that is widely embraced.
2. Build deeper connections and engagement with the families we serve.
3. Establish a sound governance & management structure that includes clear articulation of the working relationship with the synagogues.
4. Continually adapt and improve the educational model and its delivery.
5. Develop a sustainable financial model.

# The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis • Operating Plan | 2015–2016 (updated 3.15.15)

## **GOAL 1: Develop and clearly communicate a meaningful, relevant value proposition that is widely embraced.**

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### **Responsible for advancing/overseeing: Communications Task Force**

Comprised of current Marketing & Communications Committee with further support requested from synagogues

### **How we will measure progress:**

- Families rate TT as high priority relative to other activities in annual survey and that they increasingly report they want (not have) to be at TT
- Enrollment figures are steady/growing in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; students are retained after 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- Attendance figures show continued improvement

Action Step	Timeframe
Form Communications Task Force (TT Executive Committee action).	April-May 2015
Communicate planning and implementation (as it progresses).	May-September 2015
Develop value proposition grounded in research (parent surveys, strategic planning assessments) and distinctive from “competitors.”	Summer-Fall 2015
Engage professional expertise for rebranding/reimaging.	Fall-Winter 2015
Develop communications plan that identifies target audiences (e.g. current parents, prospective families w/younger children, donors, etc.); reflects the mission, vision and competitive distinction; articulates key messages + related proof points; and, offers visual identity standards.	Fall-Winter 2015 <i>(roll out for spring 2016 registration)</i>
Obtain synagogues’ commitment to consistently promote TT’s value proposition to their communities.	Winter-Spring 2016

**GOAL 2: Build deeper connections and engagement with the families we serve.**

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**Responsible for advancing/overseeing:** Family Connections Committee  
 Comprised of renamed Education Committee and education lay leaders at synagogues

**How we will measure progress:**

- Events are launched to engage families
- Families report greater satisfaction with TT in annual survey
- Attendance grows at events (showing broadening participation)
- Volunteerism deepens (showing more parents volunteering)

Action Step	Timeframe
Develop an intentional plan to engage and integrate families (e.g. “engagement ambassadors” who will connect on an individual basis). Plan will include master calendar of engagement events to bring parents together and to break the cycle of “drop and run” and to promote TT as a center for Jewish living and learning.	June 2015
Develop joint synagogue/school programming.	July 2015
Arrange direct classroom observations so parents experience TT first-hand.	Fall 2015
Create informal but intentional ways for synagogues to help families connect with those in partner congregation.	Winter 2015
Identify and propose specific options for solving the transportation issue (crossover with goal 5).	2016–17

### **GOAL 3: Establish a sound governance & management structure that includes clear articulation of the working relationship with the synagogues.**

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**Responsible for advancing/overseeing:** Executive Committee & Head of School Search Committee

**How we will measure progress:**

- Staffing model completed
- Board composition and recruiting codified; board roles, responsibilities & expectations articulated
- Committee structure defined

<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Create brit; gain agreement between TT and the synagogues.	Spring 2015
Form Search Committee to hire Head of School.	Summer 2015
Codify composition of board of directors (from synagogues, how recruiting will be done/skill needs identified, etc.) and articulate board roles and responsibilities (e.g., set long-range educational goals and desired outcomes, fundraising expectations, etc.).	August 2015
Develop a flexible and sustainable committee structure that aligns with the strategic priorities of TT.	August 2015
Implement staffing model to meet the following essential functions of the school: 1) chief executive; 2) chief administrator; 3) fundraising and development; 4) marketing and communications; 5) finance and accounting; 6) family engagement.	Head of School hired by April 2016 (Susie's contract ends June 2016)

**GOAL 4: Continually adapt and improve the educational model and its delivery.**

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**Responsible for advancing/overseeing:** Head of School with support from CETT and Family Connections liaison

**How we will measure progress:**

- Students meet educational objectives
- Students report greater engagement and understanding of living a Jewish life

Action Step	Timeframe
Measure student engagement at beginning and end of year.	May 2015
Define and communicate educational benchmarks through review of scope & sequence.	Fall 2015
Investigate 21 <sup>st</sup> century educational practices in schools that are thriving (not limited to Jewish schools; AISH, etc.). Include research of technology possibilities. (new Head of School to lead this effort)	June 2016+
Review relevancy of curriculum with rabbis and educational leaders at synagogues.	Ongoing
Ensure robust professional development for staff. (new Head of School to lead this effort)	June 2016+

## **GOAL 5: Develop a sustainable financial model.**

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**Responsible for advancing/overseeing:** Finance Committee, TT Board Chair, Executive Directors of synagogues, financial lay leaders at synagogues

**How we will measure progress:**

- Funding increases in identified categories (parents, donors, etc.)
- New sources of funding obtained for key initiatives (e.g., transformative teaching,)

<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Develop plan to increase funding and/or reduce expenses in key areas.	Short term: by May 2015 Long-term: spring 2016
Identify dedicated staff support (either at TT or shared via Adath/Beth El) and strong lay leadership to implement model.	Short-term: Sept 2015 Long term: spring 2016
Identify and propose specific options for solving the transportation issue (crossover with goal 2).	2016–17

# THE TALMUD TORAH OF MINNEAPOLIS

## Strategic Planning Overview

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### Overview

The strategic planning process for The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis began in June 2014, with a final plan approved in March 2015. The efforts were guided by the consultants, Parenteau Graves, working in tandem with strategic planning co-chairs Marty Chester and Dan Weiss, Talmud Torah board president Mike Greenstein, and a committee of members from both the Adath Jeshurun and Beth El synagogues.

Over the course of nine months, the group engaged in numerous sessions to discuss, debate and refine Talmud Torah's mission, vision, competitive distinction and goals. The faculty and staff also participated through a survey and an in-person planning session. The boards of the synagogues were consulted throughout the process, with a presentation in December.

### Strategic Planning Committee Members

Meira Besikoff  
Lev Buslovich  
Susie Chalom  
Marty Chester  
Matt Cohen  
Brian Cook

Dani Fisher  
Steve Gilfix  
Leslie Gotlieb  
Mike Greenstein  
Jen Lewin  
Rabbi Avi Olitzky

Rick Soskin  
Amy Susman-Stillman  
Rabbi Aaron Weinger  
Dan Weiss  
Alan Yousha

### Planning Sessions

June 9, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#1)
August 18, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#2)
August 28, 2014	Faculty & Staff Meeting
September 8, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#3)
October 20, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#4)
November 5, 2014	Strategic Planning Phone Conference: (leaders w/Parenteau Graves)
November 17, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#5)
November 20, 2014	Meeting with Synagogue Boards
December 7, 2014	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#6)
February 10, 2015	Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#7)
March 11, 2015	Final Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (#8)



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BRIT FOR THE TALMUD TORAH OF MINNEAPOLIS  
BETWEEN ADATH JESHURUN CONGREGATION AND BETH EL SYNAGOGUE  
ברית לתלמוד תורה של מינאפוליס בין קהילות עדת ישורון ובית אל

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We, representing members of Adath Jeshurun Congregation and Beth El Synagogue, in our continuing effort to fulfill the *mitzvah* of teaching Torah to our children, enter this *brit* (covenant) with each other.

In 2013, Adath and Beth El assumed control of the Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, making it the joint religious school of our congregations for grades 2 through 8. In January 2015, our congregations endorsed Talmud Torah's Mission and Vision statements:

Mission

The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, the school of the Adath Jeshurun and Beth El congregations, engages students of all backgrounds in educational experiences that provide a foundation and the lifelong tools for living an intentionally Jewish life.

Vision

To be a thriving school that offers a curriculum relevant to our students and their families, that inspires a commitment to Torah and Jewish living, and that builds a deep connection with the land of Israel and all Jewish people.

Fundamental Principles

The purpose of this *brit* is to provide a foundation and guidance for our joint operation of Talmud Torah consistent with the Mission and Vision. The overriding fundamental principles of our collaboration include:

1. Continuing Commitment. We are committed to an enduring and deepening partnership in educating our congregations' children and fulfilling the Mission and Vision.
2. Equal Partnership. We are equal partners in all aspects of Talmud Torah.
3. Ultimate Responsibility. Jointly, we are ultimately responsible for all aspects of Talmud Torah.
4. Honest and Respectful Communication. We commit to engage in honest, respectful, and direct communication about all issues affecting Talmud Torah. We recognize that this will sometimes require difficult conversations, and may cause disagreements. We commit to share disagreements with each other, and to work together to resolve them in a manner consistent with the spirit of this *brit*.
5. United but Distinct Congregations. We recognize that our congregations have distinct traditions, identities, and views on certain issues. We commit to respecting these differences as we advance the Mission and Vision.

## Commitments

To fulfill the Mission and Vision of Talmud Torah, we make these commitments:

1. We will develop a meaningful, relevant message about the value of Talmud Torah to its students, their families, and the broader Jewish community, and we will communicate that message in a unified and consistent manner to our congregations.
2. Recognizing that Talmud Torah cannot fulfill its Mission unless it is financially sound, we will include Talmud Torah's financial health among our priorities as we develop and implement our congregations' fundraising and development plans and will fully support Talmud Torah's own fundraising efforts.
3. We will ensure that all students, regardless of financial means, are able to enroll and participate in Talmud Torah, and we will strive to keep tuition costs affordable for all.
4. We are committed to the spirit of equal partnership in running Talmud Torah, including governance, policymaking, operational and curricular supervision, budget management, and *halachic* guidance and we will work to provide quality leadership from each congregation to support and guide the school.
5. We will seek opportunities to use the time and resources of our professional staffs in ways beneficial to Talmud Torah, including the integration of functions essential to the school's operation.
6. We will coordinate programming between each congregation and Talmud Torah to build deeper connections and engagement with the families we serve in furthering the Mission and Vision.
7. We will work with Talmud Torah's professional staff to establish educational benchmarks and implement a curriculum that fulfills the Mission and Vision. We will regularly review our educational model and its delivery to ensure that it remains consistent with the Mission and Vision.
8. We will continue to collaborate, seeking new ways to further the Mission and Vision.

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With gratitude that we are able to collaborate in performing *mitzvot*, we enter this *brit* on behalf of our congregants on this 1<sup>st</sup> day of Sivan, 5775, corresponding to the 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

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Rabbi Harold Kravitz  
Senior Rabbi, Adath Jeshurun Congregation

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Rabbi Alexander Davis  
Senior Rabbi, Beth El Synagogue

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Chris Kellogg  
President, Adath Jeshurun Congregation

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Bonnie Bongard Goldish  
President, Beth El Synagogue