

Hillel Community Day School Curriculum

Goals, Scope and Integration of General and Judaic Studies

The goal of a Hillel Community Day School education is to capture our children's attention and stimulate their imagination so that they can build the skills and self-confidence that will allow them to become creative and productive citizens of our country and of our community.

The Hillel Community Day School General Studies curriculum covers materials and skills in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science that are the foundation for continued success in high school and college and, as evidenced by the achievements of many of our alumni, for advanced professional and graduate education. A Hillel Community Day School education is, however, further enriched by nurturing respect for the beliefs, traditions and values that have sustained Jews and the Jewish community through the centuries and that, in diverse ways, continue to shape and influence the lives of Jews of different denominations today.

The Judaic curriculum at Hillel Community Day School incorporates the study of Torah and traditional texts along with intensive study of Jewish History, Culture, Modern Israel, and Hebrew Language. In many instances, integration of the General and Judaic Studies curriculum encourages a more profound perspective on our common history and values. Throughout the educational process, modern methods of organizing and delivering skills and ideas are employed to encourage active learning and critical thinking and to accommodate different styles of learning. As any parent knows, how we speak to a child is as important as what we say. What is perhaps most truly unique about Hillel Community Day School are the relationships and mutual respect that develop between teachers and children and among children of different ages in this small and caring community. These relationships facilitate learning and inspire both self-confidence and tolerance for differences.

General Studies

Hillel Community Day School meets or exceeds New York State curriculum standards in all subjects and grade levels. The School adheres to the general outline of the McGraw Hill elementary school curriculum in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science – in each case with numerous enrichments that follow the needs of the students and the interests and priorities of individual classroom teachers. Examples of some of the skills that students are expected to acquire in Language Arts and Mathematics in early grades are provided below only to give a sense of how the curriculum is planned to progressively build skills and knowledge from Kindergarten through eighth grade. More specific curriculum material in each subject area and grade level is updated annually and will be available from individual classroom teachers.

Language Arts:

Kindergarten - students start with learning to recognize upper and lower case letters of the alphabet and their sounds and to recognize selected words in print. A major focus is learning to use words effectively to describe when, where and how things happen; to retell a story; predict an outcome; and, in general, to express ideas through speaking and writing.

First Grade – develop greater print awareness and reading skills; understand the sound relationships of consonants and vowels; understand use of punctuation; become more expressive in speech and writing; be able to read and listen for a main idea; predict actions or events in a story.

Second Grade – recognize word structures including base words, possessives, plurals and contractions; identify nouns, verbs and adjectives; learn to use a dictionary; write a simple paragraph with correct punctuation and capitalization; develop confidence in reading independently.

Third Grade – Continuing growth in creative expression, grammar and language skills, reading comprehension, beginning reports and research activities.

Fourth through Eighth Grades – continue process of increasing expressive and creative use of language, greater knowledge of literary forms, increasing skill in research and writing reports.

Mathematics:

Kindergarten – Introduce simple addition and subtraction and develop concepts about numbers; identify and name simple shapes; recognize and extend patterns; name and recognize numbers; understand importance and use of coins; recognize importance of time and time telling.

First Grade – Count by 2's, 5's, 10's, and 100's; identify coins and their values; tell time to the hour and half hour; measure objects and distances; read and make simple graphs; use addition and subtraction as a way of finding more information.

Second Grade – Solve problems using 2 and 3 digit numbers; tell time to the minute; use measurement to gather data; read, interpret and produce graphs; identify and compare simple fractions; identify 3-dimensional shapes.

Third Grade – Solve problems using 4 and 5 digit numbers; begin multiplication and division; data collection and analysis.

Fourth through Eighth Grades – Increasing exploration of the use of diverse mathematical tools and their application to real life problems.

Special Programs: In addition to standard academic disciplines, Hillel Community Day School takes great pleasure in its outstanding programs in Art and Music with supportive and motivating instruction. The School recently introduced a state of the art computer laboratory available as both a structured class and for enrichment of other disciplines.

Judaic Studies:

The Judaic Studies program focuses on study of *Chumash and Navi (Bible)*, *Ivrit (Hebrew language)*, *Tefillah (Prayer)*, *Dinim and Midot (Laws and Values)*, and *Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel)*. We are excited to have begun the process of incorporating major elements of the highly regarded **Tal AM Hebrew language and Jewish Studies programs** into the Hillel Community Day School curriculum. The Tal AM programs provide a wealth of materials to engage students in learning through a variety of activities that can be adapted to the children's individual learning styles (<http://www.talam.org>). The program has been adopted by over 355 schools worldwide and provides teachers with training seminars as well as materials.

There are many opportunities to integrate major themes of General and Judaic studies. For example, one project focused on Martin Luther King and Yitzchak Rabin as leaders with parallel political goals who were martyred for their dedication to people and principles. A sixth grade class studied Talmudic sources relating to Passover while simultaneously studying Egyptian civilization in their General History class. Through these and other parallel studies, the interweaving of common values and history enriches our perspective on both.

Ivrit (Hebrew Language):

Kindergarten - Gain familiarity with the sound and rhythm of Hebrew language; recognize Hebrew alphabet and sound relationships; recognize and write Hebrew name; learn vocabulary unique to Jewish content, Sabbath, holidays, prayer, Torah and values; learn Hebrew songs and Hatikvah.

First Grade – Hebrew language immersion, instruction is in Hebrew with English utilized as needed; learn to read and write both print and cursive.

Second Grade – Function in a nearly total Ivrit environment; build reading comprehension, oral and written expression.

Third Grade – Increase vocabulary and reading comprehension; grammar skills; creative writing.

Fourth through Eighth Grades – Enhance vocabulary; continued growth in oral and written expression; increasing exposure to literary forms. As a result of the very rigorous Hebrew language program, Hillel Community Day School students receive 3 year Hebrew language Regents credit for High School.

Dinim and Midot (Laws and Values):

At every grade level, through discussions of biblical stories, current events, and Halacha (religious law) students and teachers explore the meaning and implications of core Jewish values embodied in such concepts as:

בצלם אלקים *B'tzelem Elokim* - Man is created in G-d's image. What implications does this have for our abilities and responsibilities?

דרך ארץ *Derech Eretz* – Thoughtful Conduct, sensitivity to others.

תיקון עולם *Tikkun Olam* – Repairing the World. We are responsible to G-d and to each other for what we do as well as for what we do not do.

As adults, we know that we are privileged to be heirs to a faith and culture that has been a source of strength and pride for our families and for our people. We witness with pleasure and admiration the many ways in which families adopt and adapt Jewish living to the challenges in their lives. Hillel Community Day School is committed to supporting the efforts our families make to communicate these values to their children.