



STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

I. Mission Statement

The Hamilton Jewish Middle School (HJMS) is committed to academic excellence in both Judaic & General studies. HJMS offers inspired teaching by outstanding faculty members who focus on the needs of each student. HJMS fosters in its students a love and understanding of their heritage, the State of Israel, and the people of Israel. The HJMS graduate is poised to be a contributing member of Canadian society and possess a global outlook of social consciousness.

II. Core Beliefs

At HJMS self-expression, inquiry, and independent thinking are integral to the learning process. HJMS provides the framework for students to explore, extend, and intensify their involvement with Jewish living in an open and understanding atmosphere.

HJMS is dedicated to creating a learning environment that explores the modern relevancy and application of classical Jewish ideas and texts while respecting the diverse backgrounds and affiliations of all students. All students are embraced equally with a strong emphasis placed on subjects that unite and define us as Jews.

Interdisciplinary integration allows students to explore core ideas across various subject matters. Integration conveys important lessons enabling students to see the relevancy of Jewish wisdom in modern life and the world as an organic whole.

HJMS aspires to instill within its students:

- A passion for Jewish living
- A love for Jewish learning
- A strong foundation of Jewish knowledge
- A deep commitment to the broader Jewish community
- Zionist ideals with an appreciation of the historical and religious significance of the Land
- The moral and ethical values of Judaism through practical integration
- A sense of civic responsibility
- A universal outlook of social concern

III. Educational Philosophy

HJMS, is a co-educational Jewish community middle school, welcoming students and families from diverse Jewish affiliations and belief streams who join together in common learning. HJMS fosters an atmosphere of inquiry and intellectual stimulation during the critical early adolescent years providing a setting for emotional growth in a safe and nurturing environment. Our general studies programme meets and exceeds the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education preparing and encouraging students to continue the pursuit of knowledge throughout

their lives. Our goal is to enable our students to appreciate the significance of Jewish values and see their integration into the democratic traditions of Canadian and Western culture.

HJMS cultivates leadership skills through dynamic programming that develops strong communication skills, creative thinking and cooperative group problem solving strategies. These goals are achieved through a wide range of activities including student run initiatives, workshops, retreats, team sports in the Hamilton-Wentworth Athletic Divisions, participation in community events, and public presentations.

In Judaic Studies, HJMS offers two tracks: A Cultural Based Track (CBT) and a Source Based Track (SBT)

a) Cultural Based Track:

Students will be exposed to the richness of Jewish life and are expected to:

- Examine Jewish social studies through the study of present-day life in Israel and Jewish historical figures throughout the ages
- Explore Biblical narratives and concepts through a contemporary lens
- Investigate relevant lessons from the Talmud as they apply to modern-day life
- Foster informed debate and critical thinking

b) Source Based Track:

Students will be exposed to the richness of Jewish life and are expected to:

- Develop an understanding of the historical context and genre of classical Jewish works
- Develop the skills required to read, interpret, analyze and appreciate classic Jewish texts
- Foster informed debate and critical thinking