

September TERS Bulletin Message

Welcome back! We hope that you and your families enjoyed your summer vacation time together. We were busy all summer making plans for our students' safe return to religious school, which will begin as a virtual program. Our mission is to ensure that our children are learning in a comfortable environment, which is in the safety of their own homes, until the COVID-19 vaccine is made available to everyone. We made this decision after much deliberation and after consulting with medical experts, state public health guidelines and the Temple Emanu-El building re-entry committee.

Special thanks to Barbara Kallan and Marc Goldsmith for a grant from the Goldsmith-Kallan Fund, which allowed members of our staff to attend professional development workshops through the Summer NewCAJE virtual conference. We learned a great deal this summer and gathered new virtual curriculum resources and ideas available to Jewish educators nationwide.

New and Innovative Program for our Religious School

This year, starting on September 13, our school will be using Shalom Learning's values based curriculum and Hebrew program in grades K-7. This award-winning program was developed by a team of Jewish and secular educators and curriculum developers. Our school is among 120 partner synagogues making Jewish education more engaging and relevant for our students. The Shalom Learning values-based curriculum explores seven Jewish values and their relevance in our everyday lives. Students will learn to use Jewish culture, holidays, text, history, and traditions to make responsible decisions and build positive relationships.

Using the Shalom Learning Hebrew program, we will teach your children to read Hebrew, chant prayers, and understand their meaning. At home, your child can log into the Shalom Learning portal to practice reading and prayers. Learning together in a virtual classroom, students will see and interact with each other in a real-time, teacher-led class. By being able to log in from home (or anywhere), students understand that learning and Judaism happens everywhere, not just in the Religious School.

For more information about Shalom Learning, go to www.shalomlearning.org. If you have questions about how our school is implementing the program please contact us at religiousschool@tewaterford.org. We look forward to a wonderful new school year and a productive partnership with Shalom Learning.

Focused Learning and Social Opportunities

This school year is our chance to take advantage of modern and engaging ways to approach Jewish education. We will maximize student learning in compressed schedules that provide Judaics and Hebrew lessons within smaller groups (pairs or one-on-one check-ins). Grades K-2 and 8 will meet only on Sundays while Grades 3-7 will meet on Sundays and Wednesdays. There will be an emphasis on interactivity and

special activities that will be meaningful for the youngest grades (for example, craft material kits will be sent home).

As we get back to structured and focused learning for our students, we also know how important it is for them to gather for some fun age-appropriate activities. Throughout the school year, we will be coordinating events (virtual for now) so that kids still have the chance to connect and socialize. We will continually monitor Connecticut Public Health guidelines for the latest news and will evaluate when it is safe to return to the school building for in-person learning and social events.

We appreciate everyone's patience and support as we embark on school year 5781. Please submit your child's registration as soon as possible so we can set them up with their login information for our Shalom Learning curriculum portal.

Shana tovah u'metukah,

Armi and Jennifer