



President report

Prepared for the Talmud Torah Society AGM - June 10, 2025

Dear parents, grandparents, teachers, board members, staff, and community members, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 113th Talmud Torah Society AGM, and my second AGM as president of the Society. Your presence here means a great deal - thank you for joining us, for your dedication, and for your attentiveness. I look forward to providing an overview of our achievements over the past year.

Over the past year, the Talmud Torah Society has continued its work in service of our students, families, and community. The dedication of our board members, committee members, and staff continues to inspire me. We are fortunate to have such committed individuals driving our society and school forward. Guided by our values and long-term vision, we made meaningful progress in several key areas.

1. Governance and Board Leadership

The Board and the executive committee met regularly throughout the year, maintaining quorum and a consistent rhythm of decision-making. Our meeting agendas reflected a balance of strategic discussion and operational oversight, supported by committee reports and motions. We welcomed new board members, reviewed Terms of Reference for each committee, and conducted votes on key motions ranging from capital investments to policy revisions. In addition, we reviewed and updated key governance practices to align with best practices for non-profit management.

2. Finance and Budgeting

Our Finance Committee chaired by James Friedman worked diligently to monitor the Society's fiscal health. This included close oversight of monthly revenue and expenditures, regular updates to year-to-date financials, and preparation of the 2025–2026 budget. We remained attentive to maintaining a healthy surplus while responding to increased operational costs. The Society also managed major capital spending responsibly, most notably in preparation for a full roof replacement during summer 2025.





3. Facility Improvements and Capital Projects

In response to long-standing maintenance needs, the Building Committee, chaired by James Friedman, coordinated planning and vendor procurement for a complete roof replacement scheduled for this summer. This major capital project was prioritized based on structural assessments and the roof's end-of-life condition, with efforts made to minimize disruption to programming. In addition, the shed was repaired and re-shingled. The committee is also working on securing a quote for new projector and screen installation in the gym.

4. Early Learning Centre (ELC) Oversight

The ELC Committee chaired by Ohad Eliyahu remained focused on high-level operations, financial performance, and program continuity. Monthly reports included updates on YTD revenues and expenditures, with committee oversight ensuring alignment between staffing levels, enrollment, and budget forecasts. The ELC continued to operate with strong family engagement and support and mentor our professional staff leadership. Strategic discussions included sustainability, space planning for potential expansion, and communication with parents.

5. Educational Programming and Curriculum

The education committee led by Michelle Huberman, together with Nurit Reshef, our consultant made significant progress this year in enhancing the Hebrew Language Arts (HLA) and Judaic Studies (JS) programs. A major focus was refining K–6 implementation guides for all subject areas—Bible, Prayer, History, and Israel Studies—with clear learning goals, scope and sequence charts, key vocabulary, and grade-level grammar expectations to ensure continuity across grades.

To support accessibility, a new HLA/JS Google Site was launched for teachers, administrators, and parents. It houses all draft documents and will be regularly updated.

Priorities for next year include finalizing the guides, creating parent-friendly summaries, and developing comprehensive Hebrew assessments in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension.

In the Early Learning Center, a draft Hebrew Framework is being piloted. It provides age-appropriate activities aligned with a structured scope and sequence, promoting consistency across classrooms.



6. Communications and Engagement

Community engagement remained a priority of the Board. Our Communications Committee, chaired by Nomi Steen, facilitated regular updates to families and stakeholders, with improvements to newsletters, announcements, and the school website.

7. Supporting Staff and Strengthening Operations:

The HR Committee, chaired by Stacie Perlmutter, supported staff development and organizational alignment by conducting annual performance reviews, updating employment contracts, and refining job descriptions. It collaborated with the ELC Committee on policy and procedure development, reviewed electronic record-keeping, and worked with board members on staff scheduling and day-to-day HR matters.

8. Safety and Security

The Society responded to the evolving threat landscape by maintaining partnerships with security professionals, maintaining on-site security coverage, and reviewing emergency protocols. The board and school administration worked collaboratively to apply for grants, install upgraded surveillance, and enhance entryway protocols. Unfortunately, we did not secure any grants to cover the cost of onsite security this year. Security costs were partially covered by the remaining casino funds, our operational budget, and families' security fees.

9. Strategic Planning

Throughout the year, Board and Executive leadership engaged in strategic planning initiatives that examined long-term enrollment, program viability, and resource allocation. These efforts included assessments of volunteerism, junior high feasibility, and capital fundraising. A review of the strategic plan revealed that some tasks have not yet been completed. We thus extended the current strategic plan in an additional year, such that the current strategic plan will end in June of 2026. The board will be working towards a new strategic plan in the coming year. This will include a comprehensive community survey which will be thoroughly analyzed and several planned workshops. We remain focused on ensuring a thriving and sustainable future for Talmud Torah, grounded in community values and educational excellence.

10. Board and School Collaboration

The Society's primary goal remains to support the school in delivering an outstanding Jewish education, and as in past years, a cornerstone of this year's success has been the strong collaboration between the Society and our school principal, Darin Johnson. Through regular communication, aligned priorities, and a shared commitment to student success, we worked together to uphold program integrity and foster a thriving school environment. Darin's leadership and dedication to Jewish education have been evident throughout the year, and his partnership with the Board has been instrumental in implementing the JS and Hebrew curriculum, addressing challenges, and building a culture of shared purpose. To that end, Darin and I met consistently to strengthen our relationship, maintain open dialogue, and address emerging needs together.



One of the most exciting outcomes of this year is the growth in student enrollment, with 150 children registered for the 2025–2026 school year in Talmud Torah. In response to this growth, and in close consultation with Darin, the Society has committed \$375,000 to support key areas including the maintenance of increased instructional time, enhanced Judaic Studies programming, and small class sizes. Additionally, we will continue to fund targeted intervention instruction—at the principal’s discretion—for literacy and mathematics, and maintain our current Educational Assistant supports, who play a vital role in the classroom. This partnership reflects our shared vision for educational excellence and our dedication to the continued success of Talmud Torah.

11. Community Support and Program Enrichment:

As always, we have collaborated closely with community institutions to engage more families in both the school and the broader Jewish community. This year, we partnered with JFED, Shalom Baby, PJ Library, and JNF on several initiatives to strengthen communal ties and enhance Jewish engagement.

A major new initiative this year was the launch of the Grade 6 graduation program, led by Marit Abrams with support from Natalie Soroka and Michelle Huberman. This program aimed to equip students with essential life skills—such as budgeting, navigating public transportation, and responding to antisemitism—while also fostering community involvement through volunteer opportunities. The program culminated in a successful Grade 6 Shabbaton this past weekend, delivered in partnership with the Calgary Jewish Academy and Camp BB, with Ari Sniderman leading the activities. Highlights included a meaningful, fun, and educational weekend, as well as a video call connecting our students with Grade 6 peers in Israel.

We gratefully acknowledge the National Council of Jewish Women for their \$500 donation in support of this program, and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton for facilitating a \$1,200 grant dedicated to resilience and antisemitism training.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the broader community for their support of the annual UJA campaign. Dozens of Talmud Torah families benefit directly through the Integrated Bursary Program (IBP), which ensures that no Jewish child is denied access to Jewish education due to financial need. IBP fairly and objectively assesses applications and provides essential tuition support to those who qualify.

In addition to IBP support, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton awarded a \$3,500 grant in April 2025 for the purchase of 10 new Chromebooks for the school and a \$1,000 grant in December 2024 for Judaic-themed rugs for ELC classrooms.



We also thank the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation for their generous contributions: a \$5,000 grant received in July 2024 to support Judaic curriculum development in the ELC, and an additional \$5,000 grant from July 2023 (not previously reported) that was used to purchase Hebrew Language Arts materials to enhance classroom libraries.

12. Our Staff:

The society would not function as it does without the tireless efforts of those who work for us and our students. From the bottom of our hearts, we extend our deepest thanks to Natalie Soroka, whose passion, commitment, and constant willingness to go above and beyond are truly invaluable. Your energy and care uplift everyone around you.

We also thank Tara Carlson, our dedicated bookkeeper, for her precision, efficiency, and the essential role she plays in keeping the Society accountable and running smoothly. It is a true privilege to have you in our corner.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the ELC leadership team. Your commitment to creating a warm, nurturing, and welcoming environment for our youngest learners and their families does not go unnoticed. Your leadership, care, and consistent effort are key to the success of our early learning programs, and we are truly grateful.

13. TTS Board:

Without a doubt, the Society could not function without the incredible support of our volunteers. Thank you to all our committee members for your time, insight, and dedication to advancing the work of the Society. A special thank you to Karen Hering, Michelle Huberman, and their devoted library team for their tireless efforts in maintaining our library and continually adding exciting new books for children to enjoy—whether in English, Hebrew, or exploring diverse Jewish themes.

This has been an exceptionally busy year for the Society. The Board continues to lead initiatives that benefit the school, our students, and the wider community. We remain committed to following best governance practices and to learning and evolving as we grow.

As a few Board members reach the end of their terms, I would like to recognize and thank Stacie Perlmutter for her three years of dedicated service in multiple roles, following earlier contributions to the ELC Committee. Stacie—your quiet sensitivity, thoughtful approach, and vibrant energy have been an absolute gift. It has been a privilege to work with you and learn from you.

I would also like to acknowledge James Friedman, Nomi Steen, and Barry Slawsky, all completing their three-year terms and standing for re-election at this AGM. James has served as Secretary and now Treasurer; Nomi



has chaired the Communications Committee and served as Secretary of the Board; and Barry has led the Friedman Fund travel allocations and played a key role in facilitating the upcoming roof replacement. The fact that all three are seeking to continue reflects their strong commitment to our community and the value they place on community involvement and volunteering. I think it also goes to show how much fun we have together... It's been an absolute pleasure working with each of you, and I encourage everyone to vote for their return— we still have lots of work to do!

Thank you to all of those who are continuing on the board: Michelle Huberman, Ohad Eliyahu, Elad Dinur, Joel Reboh, and Shayne Abrams. I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

I would also like to acknowledge Cara Greenspan, who has been the TT SC chair and thus a board member for the past two years. We, and the school community at large are very lucky to have you on board. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity and send a special thank you to Leeor Eliyahu, our Past President, who has been on the board for about a million years by now. Your guidance and advice are invaluable.

In closing, I extend my deepest thanks to our dedicated families. The strength of our Society in the past, the present and the future lies in your commitment. Together, we continue to build a community where Jewish education thrives.

Respectfully submitted,

Noga Vaisblat
President, Talmud Torah Society