

PERSPECTIVES

Jewish day school: Is it too Jewish?

“Too Jewish” means different things to different people, but if you’re concerned that Jewish day school will teach your child too much Torah and not enough science, math, literature or art, there is ample evidence to the contrary. A day school education is rigorous, well rounded and often unparalleled – and the students come from diverse backgrounds. Unlike public and other independent schools, Jewish day schools leverage the study of ancient texts and the mastery of two languages to drive success. Students are encouraged to uncover richer layers of meaning, make profound connections between ideas and concepts, then expand that insight into real-world action. Take a look at these facts.



BEYOND ACADEMICS

The best of both worlds

While many independent schools feature outstanding courses, a Jewish day school’s curriculum offers advanced academics – and more. A typical day includes Hebrew and Jewish studies classes. Not only do children learn to navigate this additional coursework, they use that Jewish education to amplify their understanding of general studies.

Studying Talmud, for example, sharpens their abilities to think analytically, formulate questions and dig deeper into issues. Reasoning and communicating in two languages helps kids take on more complex challenges, including writing code, deciphering the meaning of a poem, solving a word problem and someday mastering a third language. This approach to education fosters collaboration and critical thinking, heightening their sense of empathy and social responsibility. At the same time, Jewish day schools offer highly sophisticated secular classes even for their youngest students, including mythology, art history, astronomy, architecture and entrepreneurial science.



PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Ready for what’s next

So does Jewish day school adequately prepare your kid for college... and life? The experts think so. According to data analyzed by the College Board, SAT scores are positively affected by learning a second language. Foreign language students score higher on their SAT tests – and their scores also improve with each year of study. A Stanford University study found that “elementary students in immersion programs have better linguistic competency than non-immersion high school students taking advanced AP classes in that language.”

Brandeis University research confirms that Jewish day school grads demonstrate greater levels of success, are more willing to help those in need and fight for positive change in society and are more likely to make good choices when they go off to college. Rather than

becoming too insular, day school students develop lifelong friends and contacts. Leading prayer services and reading Torah also help children feel comfortable speaking to adults and addressing groups. They have excellent self-advocacy skills and invaluable insight into other cultures.

Students’ knowledge of Hebrew enhances their understanding of higher-level mathematics, information technology and engineering. Applying lessons of the past to today engages them to be citizens of the world with an interest in global politics and a willingness to question the status quo.



FITTING IN

Finding your place

Lots of parents wonder whether Jewish day school is the right fit for their family, based on their own upbringing. Maybe they didn’t attend day school or go to a Jewish camp growing up. Not a problem. Many Jewish day schools are open to all denominations and levels of observance. New parents may also enjoy the community feeling of a Jewish day school, finding their own connection and meaning, as their kids learn about traditions and holidays.

Some day school students come from homes where families keep kosher, and they attend synagogue regularly; others have families in which Judaism is more cultural than religious. Families are welcome, regardless of background, neighborhood or income.

The goal is a well-rounded education in a warm, inclusive environment, based on the teachings and principles of thousands of years of history and thought, delivered in a setting that inspires today’s children to become tomorrow’s leaders.

If you’re considering Perelman and want to learn more, please call Mindy Andelman, Director of Enrollment, at 267-571-9319, mandelman@pjds.org