

Communicating your Choice of Model

Now that you've taken the exciting critical first **I*Express** step of choosing a new model of learning for your families, you need to alert your community and prepare them for what to expect in the months ahead.

To whom should we be communicating?

First, identify who you want to make sure hears about your choice and what you expect it to mean for your congregation. These are the target audiences for your communication. They should include:

- Synagogue leadership, including clergy and board members
- Synagogue staff
- Parent body
- Student body (depending on age)
- Teachers
- Other?

How should we communicate to our target audiences?

How you communicate your choice may be based on your target audience or your sense of how important announcements are best communicated within your congregational community. Though you are at the very early stages of working out the details of your model, you still will want to get the word out as a way of starting to lay the groundwork for the planning and implementation to come. Some early channels for communication might include:

- In-person announcements, in meetings or from the bimah
- Article in the congregational bulletin and/or local Jewish press
- Write-up in a Shabbat service handout
- Congregational e-blast
- Announcement on the synagogue's website or facebook page
- Website blog entry
- Other social media announcements

What should we be communicating at this early stage?

At this point you are unable to go into great detail about the changes in store with your new model, but you can explain some of your rationale and convey your excitement about the future of learning for your students and families.

In the interest of giving your new model a unique identity in your congregation, you may want to give it a name. Whether English or Hebrew, a name can help to distinguish your new model from your existing school model. Some congregations have even developed a graphic logo that brands their new model and acts as a visual alert for all communications.

Below are several suggestions of ways you can craft your communication. You may want to choose one or create your own hybrid.

Suggestion #1:

Build your announcement around the answers to these questions:

- What have we decided?
- Why did we make this decision?
- How will it impact the target audience?

Suggestion #2:

Build your announcement around the answers to these questions:

- What do you see as the challenge that needs addressing?
- Why should the target audience care about this challenge?
- What is your solution (choice of model) and how does it address this challenge?
- What evidence do you have that your solution will address this challenge?
- What can the target audience expect will change as a result of your solution?

Suggestion #3:

- Based on feedback received over the years, describe what was/is lacking in the target audience's childhood experiences of Jewish learning
- Affirm those deficiencies and add the team's input
- Describe how the new model will address these combined concerns

Consider including in your communication an overview of your timeline, the names of your **I*Express** team members and contact information if someone has questions about your plans.