

## Proposal for Impact Focused Funding – Education

### *Grant type 1: direct to eligible organizations*

#### Overview – “We invest in educators”

Formal education is a cornerstone of our community. Minneapolis offers families a range of preschools, day schools and supplemental (synagogue/Hebrew) schools, along with resources to further support students with mental and physical health, disability accommodation and social development.

Minneapolis is a stronger, more resilient community when we have a diverse and thriving ecosystem of educational options. When parents (including future parents) consider where to live and work, Minneapolis is more attractive when educational options are varied and high-quality.

Additionally, a healthy ecosystem of Jewish education attracts and retains community professionals who are looking for a vibrant Jewish world in which to work.

The Discovery Phase of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding identified teacher retention and development as a consistent urgent need for all schools in our community.

With a focus on investing in educators, our community can support all our schools in a meaningful way and achieve measurable impact.

#### Why this focus?

The educator talent gap is not unique to the Minneapolis Jewish community. It affects public, private and specialty schools across the country. Classroom demands are intensifying; modern education requires training in new pedagogy; and compensation tends to be lower than in other professions with similar educational requirements.

But within the Jewish community, these challenges are magnified by:

- The specificity of our schools’ needs for expertise (Judaic studies and Hebrew)
- Salaries and benefits with limited competitive strength
- Demand for a significant number of part-time educators, particularly for supplemental schools

The leaders of every formal education program in our community have affirmed that targeted and sustained investment in retention and development would strengthen their ability to achieve their mission of relevant, engaging and effective Jewish education.

#### Funding

A common industry standard for a healthy organization’s retention and development budget is 1% of salaries and benefits. Organizations often use this as a guideline for gauging what they need to invest in fostering a healthy and engaging work environment.

We used 1% of salaries and benefits of partner schools as a starting point for setting an initial funding target to invest in educators. We further refined that target through close partnership between Community Impact and Philanthropy, to assess sustainable giving capacity in our community.

The resulting fundraising target for Year 1 of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding is \$68,000, with a commitment for the same or more in 2024 and 2025.

To increase the community's impact on par with our commitment to education without fatiguing or overextending our already generous funders, this proposal asks the Board of Directors commit to supplementing the initial target of \$68,000 with up to a 1:1 match, to create a total funding pool of \$136,000 available for Impact Focused Funding grants in 2024.

Then, in the second and third years of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, it requests the Board to commit to similar matches to keep the funding pool to a minimum of \$136,000 for each of the years.

**Approval of these matching funds is at the discretion of the Board.** The intent is for the Board to determine a source and strategy for these matching funds that do not impact the annual campaign achievement and/or other philanthropic priorities.

Note that this funding and grant process is distinct from what is traditionally referred to as “core allocations” to these partners—the unrestricted funding allocated annually from the community campaign. Impact Focused Funding grants will not impact unrestricted allocations for the duration of the Pilot.

### Grants eligibility

The schools initially eligible to apply for these funds are our current partner schools:

#### Day Schools

- Bais Yaakov High School
- Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School
- Torah Academy

#### Supplemental Schools

- Bet Shalom Congregational School
- Talmud Torah of Minneapolis
- Temple Israel Congregational School
- Shir Tikvah Congregational School

Schools may apply, individually or in collaboration with each other, for grants to support such things as:

- Continuing education scholarships and/or reimbursement
- Scholarships for in-community childcare, preschool or elder care
- Incentives for alumni to return to teach in the community
- Study fellowships and/or grants
- Mentoring and/or peer coaching
- Classroom resources (if they are intended to support educator retention and/or development)

These are intended as examples only—schools have full discretion on how to use the funds to invest in educators, provided they explain their plan/program and their method for measuring its effectiveness over a 2- to 3-year period.

Schools are encouraged to build on initiatives they already have in place, provided that Impact Focused Funding grants are treated as plus-dollars.

## Partnership

For the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding to be successful at any level, it is essential that MJF and schools work closely together to ensure:

- The burden on partners for application and reporting is minimized
- The amount of work involved to apply for and use grants is commensurate with the size of the grant
- Schools that want/need technical assistance in establishing simple impact metrics have timely access to expertise at no cost to them
- The community achieves the benefits of visioning, executing and learning at a community scale, through centralized resources and analysis of results.

As a pilot effort, participating schools will also have annual opportunities to provide their formal feedback on the Pilot and recommendations for improvements. We anticipate in fact that annual reporting will be a two-way process, in which both sides of the partnership report to the other and provide direction/feedback to improve the process.

## Timeline

Once approved, the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding will follow the timeline below. Between April 2025 and March 2026, the cycle of partnership, application, grants, and reporting will repeat.



## Grant size and scope

Although the calculation of fundraising target started from the 1% industry standard, the intent is not to provide each eligible school with an amount based on budgeted salaries and benefits. However, schools should keep this guideline in mind when considering the scope of their requests.

Through close partnership, Community Impact and schools will develop both proposals and processes that match effort with grant size and intended impact.

If this proposal is approved, the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding commits to a minimum of 3 years of funding (grants to be awarded in 2024, 2025 and 2026). Our intention is to expand and continue impact funding in educators beyond this pilot period.

## Measuring success—what’s the impact?

Grant recipients may use any logical benchmarks for success, as long as they are measurable. Examples include:



*Reduced educator turnover*



*Increased number of qualified applicants for open positions*



*Reduced time-to-hire for open positions*



*Participation in development programs*



*Increase in ratings on staff satisfaction surveys*

We intend the reporting burden to be minimal, and MJF will provide proactive and on-call expertise to support development of viable approaches to measurement.

**Achievement of target metrics is NOT a requirement for continuation of funding in Years 2 and 3** – we are as interested in learning from what hasn’t worked as we are in documenting what does work.

In addition to measuring success at the school level, we will also collect and review data at the community level. Measures of success may include:



*More qualified applicants for all open positions across the community*



*Reduced caregiver turnover across the community*



*Every participating organization self-reports satisfaction with its use of funding*

## Proposal supplement: Beyond the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding

The intent of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding is to identify one area of investment focus for a three-year period while we test and evolve the process. However, the community visioning and commentary through has unearthed a range of creative ideas, needs, and opportunities for strengthening our community, now and in the future.

Although these opportunities lie beyond the scope of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, we will continue to explore and develop them through further partnership with organizations, community dialogue, and research.

### Additional Investments in Education

- Community-wide “signature programs” for students at key ages (kindergarten, B’nai Mitzvah, 8th grade, 11th/12th grade)
- Expanded scholarships available for formal Jewish education
- Shared resources for student mental and physical health
- Resources and promotion for the value of Jewish education to the long-term health of the community
- Centralized community education strategist (professional role) to monitor the landscape of formal education in our community and recommend investments, collaborations, facilities, etc.

These ideas will continue to be explored based on partner interest, funding, and likely impact, beyond the scope of fundraising and grantmaking in the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding.

### Expanded Eligibility

Currently, “core” allocations for formal Jewish education are restricted to K-8 day schools, one 9-12 day school, and grades 3-12 in synagogue/supplemental schools. Although the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding expands slightly the scope of grants to include all grades in synagogue/supplemental schools, there are still important educational priorities that are not addressed.

The most important of these is Jewish preschool, an all-important starting point for formal Jewish education.

Currently, our community has six Jewish preschools:

- Congregation Bet Shalom preschool
- Congregation Beth El preschool
- Congregation Temple Israel preschool
- ECC at the Minnesota JCC
- The Gan at Congregation Adath Jeshurun
- Torah Academy preschool

The Education Committee makes the strong recommendation to kick off a process as soon as possible to evaluate:

- Priorities for impact funding for preschools – are they similar to or different from those of day schools and supplemental schools?

## Community vision for the role of preschool and other birth-to-kindergarten educational options in a thriving educational ecosystem

Through this process, the Education Committee may consider other types of expansion as well, for example to support alternative and informal education opportunities.

The process will be run in close partnership with the Philanthropy Department, to ensure alignment between fundraising strategy and goals with desired measurable impact.

### Additional Support for Community Professionals

The Discovery Phase affirmed that our Jewish community organizations face workforce challenges common to all sectors: limited talent, need for greater attention to employee development and well-being, and healthy workplace relationships.

We have an opportunity as a community to take a more proactive stance in developing and reinforcing careers in Jewish organizations as rewarding, meaningful, and respected.

Some of the ways we might address this opportunity include:

- “New to your job” resources and events for professionals in Jewish organizations
- Mid-career transitions into jobs in community organizations
- Mental health and social support for community professionals
- Expanded availability of grants and vouchers for professionals to use community preschools, elder care, memberships, etc.
- Recruitment, retention, and professional development incentives
- Community-wide public health resources
- Community-wide “Jewish careers week”
- Intern/adjunct/paraprofessional programs to activate the skills, energy, and commitment of young adults in our community (ages 22-35).

Further exploration and development of approaches to building a robust pool of community professionals requires further dialogue and partnership with organizations, professionals themselves, and the broader community outside of the scope of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding.