

Jewish Learning Program

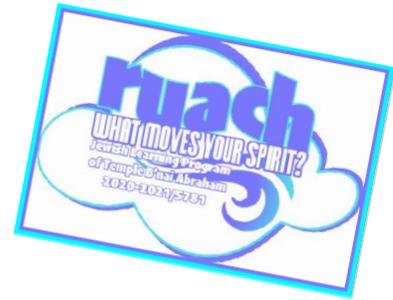
OF TEMPLE B'NAI ABRAHAM

EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2020-2021/5781



Summer 2020



Dear JLP Families,

Welcome to a new year at the Jewish Learning Program at Temple B'nai Abraham. We are a very blessed community. We are a vibrant and joyful center of Jewish life and learning. The laughter and kehillah (community) of our children is perhaps our brightest and most precious jewel. Our ability to join together has been tested by recent world events, but our desire to be a community burns ever bright. No matter how we educate your children, in person, outside, online...we cherish the moments that allow us to respond to them spiritually, compassionately, and with love. We believe strongly that our Jewish Learning Program is not only a place to learn about Jewish ideas, Hebrew, and history. It is also a place where Jewish values of kavod (respect), chesed (kindness), megillah (community) and achrayut (responsibility) are modeled and encouraged.

This year, we have chosen the theme, "What moves your spirit (ruach)?" In Kabbalah, it is commonly thought that there are three parts to the soul. The middle part is the **רוח** (RUACH)-or the spirit. It contains all of our moral virtues and helps us distinguish between good and evil. It resides primarily in our hearts. This year, we will ask the children and their families, "What moves your Ruach?" For some, we are moved by prayer. For others, tradition. Still for others, social justice. The pieces of Judaism that might move you to act, to connect and to celebrate are many- let us help you explore them!

The Baal Shem Tov taught, "...I (God) chose your soul, not because of what it was, but because of what it could become. It possessed all that you need to fulfill your holy mission in this world." We hope that through our home/synagogue/school partnership, we can contribute to helping your children fulfill their holy mission.

B'Shalom,
Morah Melissa

Morah Melissa

Melissa Gettinger Weiner , Director of Jewish Learning

COVID-19 ADDENDUM: Please note that the JLP is currently employing remote learning through the Jewish High Holy Days. In-person learning will be assessed at that time. During remote learning, Hebrew Pods remain 45 minutes, but Judaics will be shortened from 1.5 hours to 55 minutes.

Our Philosophy

The Jewish Learning Program of Temple B'nai Abraham is dedicated to working jointly with our families to teach all children the skills, knowledge, and values they will need to be life-long learners and committed Jewish adults. We respond to the child's intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs. Our program is designed to give our students:

1. A sound foundation of knowledge about Jewish history, literature, customs, ceremonies, and prayers
2. Opportunities to explore the spiritual, intellectual, and affective aspects of religion and tradition, and "Hands-on" experiences of Jewish life and learning.

Our educational program works to foster deep knowledge of and sense of responsibility toward Judaism and a commitment and connection to Jewish life, community and Israel.

To Teach Our Students to:

1. Strive to create a balance of Talmud Torah, Avodah, and Gemillut Chasadim (Jewish learning, Jewish living, and Jewish caring)
2. Decode Hebrew and gain contextual understanding of Torah and Prayer
3. Habituate understanding and practice of Tikkun Olam (acts of social justice)
4. Develop positive, celebratory experiences, and memories with Judaism
5. Learn and practice the values, rituals, and prayers of Judaism
6. Delve into the stories and history of the Jewish people
7. Approach Jewish living as active, joyous participants
8. Be responsible and caring members of our congregation, K'lal Yisrael, the Jewish people, and the broader community in which we live.

To Nurture Jews who:

1. Are strengthened in their Jewish identity and connect themselves to the Jewish people by word and deed.
2. Celebrate Shabbat and the festivals and observe the Jewish ceremonies marking the significant occasions in their lives.
3. Foster a love of Eretz Yisrael and bridge the connection between Diaspora Judaism and the Jewish homeland. Understanding the complex challenges of the Jewish State and working towards a comprehensive understanding of the region.
4. Recognize the holiness of their own person and the person of others; their own family and the family of others; their own community and the community of others.
5. Support and participate in the life of the synagogue and local Jewish Community.
6. Understand Jewish learning as a lifelong process. We seek to provide a safe and sacred space for our children and their families to discover the joys, the values, the knowledge, and the tools of Jewish life and living. festivals and observe the Jewish ceremonies marking the significant occasions in their lives.

Kindergarten, First & Second Grade: GAN, ALEPH, BET

RISHONIM: BEGINNINGS

Mondays or Tuesdays, 4-5:30 pm or 4-6:00 pm



Gan: Kindergarten

This early introduction to Jewish topics exposes our children to the message and meaning behind important Jewish concepts. The class covers the celebration of Jewish holidays, with an emphasis on the symbols and blessings that help us welcome Shabbat on Friday night. They learn to recognize our connection to and the importance of the Torah: A Special Book, they explore the very first stories of the (Creation, Noah, & the Tower of Babel). The class also begins an exploration of personal faith and spirituality using the book "Godtalk" curriculum designed to help students begin a dialogue about faith and belief. The introduction of the Hebrew aleph - bet begins as well as learning beginning modern Hebrew phrases. The children experience music, art, Jewish Makerspace, dance and Israel in creative and experiential ways.

In first grade, our children continue the exploration of Jewish holidays. More emphasis is placed on learning the rituals and blessings associated with each holiday. Students learn about the first Jewish family and other major Jewish personalities from Bereshit (Genesis). Students will have a basic introduction to the Land of Israel, as the homeland of the Jewish people (past and present). A reintroduction to the basic Hebrew alphabet and phonetics is presented through readiness activities. An exploration of basic Jewish values also begins in this grade. The class also continues the exploration of personal faith and spirituality using a storybook and a "Godtalk" curriculum designed to help students dialogue about faith and belief. The children experience music, art, Jewish Makerspace, dance and Israel in creative and experiential ways.

Aleph: Grade 1



Bet: Grade 2

Jewish Heroes! You can be one too! Students review the heroes of the Bible and their special stories, including: Moses, Joseph, Deborah, David, Solomon, and Elijah. Students use the journal, "The Giving Book" to explore tzedakah, gemilut hasadim, and other Jewish middot (values). The students explore how and why Jews are compelled to fix broken aspects world. Using games, and readiness activities, students begin Hebrew letter and phonetic exploration of the language. A favorite unit is Old Turtle which gives the children the opportunity to consider God, faith and connection to spirituality. They even make a turtle mailbox! The children experience music, art, Jewish Makerspace, dance and Israel in creative and experiential ways.



Third, Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Grades: GIMEL, DALET, HEY, VAV

SHORESHIM: ROOTS

Mondays or Tuesdays, 4-5:30 pm or 4-6

Our elementary students spend their year in two primary ways. The first is our Shoreshim, or roots days. These days are meant to build strong knowledge about, and connections to, Judaism, while building community and friendships. Each week, students experiences core, grade level curriculum through hands-on, tactile and creative settings..

GIMEL: THIRD GRADE



In Third Grade, you can expect your child to cover: Genesis & Me: Understanding My Jewish Family, modern Israel, Holy days and Holidays, the Synagogue and Siddur, Tzedakah: Reaching Out and Reaching Up, Who Knows God? and Middot: Jewish Values for Young people. Students participate in Consecration and a Siddur Presentation.

DALET: FOURTH GRADE

In Fourth Grade, students trace the steps of Moses while considering Jewish leadership values. They explore the value of freeing the captive, and ensuring the rights of all people to worship their own God. They continue their Godtalk discussions from earlier grades, by beginning to develop their own faith narrative. Holidays take on a new and rich meaning, moving from the basics into more advanced thinking. They learn about the Mezuzah, tallit and tefillin and other important Jewish objects and their meaning. Additionally, they “Walk the Bible” with Bruce Feiler in search of biblical Israel in a modern world. They also explore the meaning of Jewish names and a special study of their own.



HEY: FIFTH GRADE

In Fifth Grade, students gain new insight into Holidays and begin to consider which parts of each celebration have resonance today. They participate in a virtual twinning with a fifth grade in Israel, looking at their Jewish world, community and identity. Additionally they explore issues of Diaspora. They explore various historical time periods, culminating with the “burying” of their own time capsule. Additionally, they have a gentle introduction to the Holocaust using Hana’s Suitcase. The children lead the TBA Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance service.



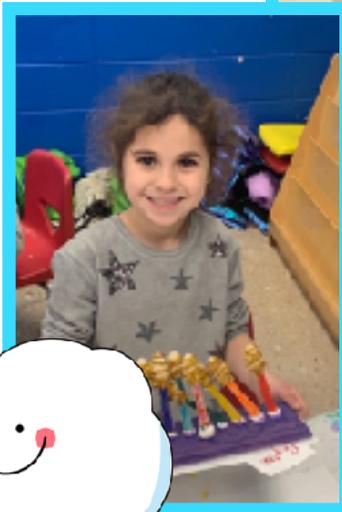
VAV: SIXTH GRADE

Sixth grade begins to prepare the children for their B'nai Mitzvah journey. Their studies are built on mitzvot. From the mitzvot associated with each holiday, to a study of Maimonides, to a look at how they can make a difference in the world, they cover it all. They explore Israel and its joys and complications. Additionally, they will get a sneak peak and study session about their upcoming Torah portion.



ALL GRADES

All grades experience music, art, Jewish Makerspace, dance, modern Hebrew, prayer skills and Israel in creative and experiential ways. Specialists bring a variety of movement and hands-on activities each session.





Third, Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Grades

GIMEL, DALET, HEY, VAV

MERCAZ IVRIT: HEBREW

Hebrew links us with more than 3,000 years of identity as a distinct people. Even after we dispersed throughout the world without our own land or government, our use of Hebrew as the language of Torah and prayer united all Jews as one people. We teach Hebrew to continue this link – across time and space– in worship and study. With that in mind, the JLP at TBA is excited to continue setting trends in Hebrew education. After many years of studying trends and growth in our students, the Board of Education and the Professional Staff determined that our children learn Hebrew best in small, individualized learning groups. Mercaz Ivrit grouping will meet once a week for 45 minutes. Classes will be limited to 5-6 students. **Classes are available both on-line and in person.** These small groupings are designed to teach the children in third grade to decode and read Hebrew and lead them towards preparation towards B'nai Mitzvah. Older grades will learn to decode the necessary B'nai Mitzvah prayers, including the chanting skills necessary for B'nai Mitzvah. Children with diagnosed learning challenges may be provided with one to one learning. Please consult the director for more information.

We are proud that this program supports our belief that all children reach developmental skills at their own pace. Small groupings allow each child significant attention which will guide not only their Hebrew success, but also their emotional well-being. Our overall goal for each of our children is success with maximum and compassionate support! Group times are scheduled during registration.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS: TBA believes that practicing skills learned in our program is an essential part of the training for B'nai Mitzvah. Families should attend the main sanctuary service on Friday and/or Saturday mornings. We ask the children to attend the following Shabbat (Friday or Saturday) services each year at TBA to reinforce their learning. Grades 3-6:

Grade 3: 3 Services

Grade 4: 4 Services

Grade 5: 5 Services

Grade 6: 6 Services

Grade 7: 7 Services

Third, Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Grades

SPECIALS SERVICES

“Rabbi Eliezer says: Let other people’s dignity be as precious to you as your own”.

Pirkei Avot 2:15

The special services program of The Temple B'nai Abraham JLP, is a warm, nurturing Jewish learning environment dedicated to children with learning and physical differences in grades K-6, with consideration given to the Bar and Bat Mitzvah process. Each child is encouraged to maximize his or her learning potential and is instilled with a lifelong love of Judaism. The children learn about Jewish holidays, Israel, and the Hebrew language in a fun and creative atmosphere. Some children benefit from a self-contained classroom, while others are partially or completely mainstreamed with support. Their needs are varied, but we are committed to engage every child and help them to live a meaningful Jewish life. Programming specifically designed to benefit your child will be developed with your participation and using your child's IEP to facilitate and build on successful secular experiences. Flexibility is built into the program to allow for changing needs and abilities. Our professionals carefully and lovingly work with each child to his or her ability. If you feel your child might benefit from special services, please do not hesitate to contact the Director, Melissa Weiner at 973-994-3950 or mweiner@tbanj.org.



MORE FUN: YOTER KEF

RISHON

Each school year will have a special visitor, a youth emissary from Israel. The Rishon will be spending many quality hours engaging our students in topics about Israel. Every grade will have a chance to meet with the Rishon monthly, and some grades will reap the benefits of weekly visits. The Rishon serves as a living bridge to Eretz Yisrael. Interested in hosting a rishon in your home? Contact Morah Melissa!

Club TBA

(2 times a month) Mondays & Tuesdays, after JLP

The formal educational program of our JLP is supplemented by students' involvement in Club TBA, a Junior Youth Group, for 3rd through 6th graders. The programs are an enjoyable social way for kids to have fun while socializing, eating and participating in games and activities with their JLP friends.

Color Wars and Special Events

The JLP staff prides itself in wonderful experiential educational opportunities. Whether a Pesach Escape Room, or Tu B'Shevat Worm Races, to yearly color wars, we strive to make Judaic learning accessible and fun. Hey we've even capitalized on Mannequin challenges and fidget fascinations!

Seventh Grade ZAYIN

MECHINAH:TRANSITIONS

Mondays and Tuesdays, 4-5:30 pm or Tuesdays, 5:45-7:15 pm

As students approach the teenage years, our focus switches to both academic knowledge and community building. Incorporating dinner or snack, learning and informal experiences, the Mechinah class strikes a balance between formal learning and choice based learning. Students participate in two main core classes throughout the year: Facing History in Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior which explores issues of identity, genocide, propaganda, convenient hatreds and more through the lens of 1931-1945. The curriculum looks at modern day justice, religious and racial inequalities. Later in the year, with the help of our Israeli Rishon, students are exposed to Israel through both a historical and critical lens. Additionally, we share with them the beauty that is the modern state of Israel. Every few weeks, students participate in these core classes. This is coupled with a "Camp" day. Students are invited to wear their Camp t-shirt and participate in a day or night dedicated to "camp" and Jewish heritage. Typical schedules will include: Ahrochat Erev (dinner or snack), Limmud (Learning), Tefillot (Prayer) and Special Chugim (Electives) and of course s'mores. Individual B'nai Mitzvah Hebrew tutoring and support is available to all students.

[Mechinah Class Individual Student Volunteer Requirements](#)

Fifteen (15) total volunteer hours are required for each Mechinah Class student as follows:

-  5 synagogue volunteer hours
-  5 community volunteer hours
-  3 additional hours of student's choice either synagogue or community
-  2 hours working at the Purim Carnival OR

Students may complete an approved mitzvah project with direct consult with the JLP staff. Volunteer Voucher forms are available on our website, www.tbanj.org. The forms are completed by the Mechinah Class student and signed by the volunteer site's adult supervisor. Students return completed forms to their homeroom teacher. A Mitzvah Opportunities list will be regularly updated with suggested volunteer opportunities.





Teen Programs 8th-12th Grades HAMAKOM: THE PLACE

MAKOM: THE PLACE for Formal Learning

8th and 9th Grade with Rabbinic Intern Max Edwards,
Mondays (1x a month), 6:30 pm

10th Grade Confirmation Class with Rabbi Vaisberg
Wednesdays (1x a month), 6:30 pm

A chance for teens in 8th, 9th and 10th grade to continue their formal education, once a month. We supply the dinner, materials and important topics. This coming year, students will study Jewish values found in social action and social justice. We will look at issues from a Jewish point of view such as the environment, hunger, visiting the sick, helping the orphan, lobbying, and more. The year will end with a local field trip.

TEEN TIKKUN OLAM

TTO, Teen Tikkun Olam, a Temple B'nai Abraham group for teens in grades 8-12 meets one to two times a month. The goal of TTO is to volunteer in our synagogue and larger community. By making a difference in meaningful ways, we hope to nourish the expanding mind and soul of our Jewish teens. We help them explore how doing for others can be a miraculous moment for both the giver and receiver. Additionally, we give teens the opportunity to become the philanthropic leaders of our teen community! Join the TTO team and make a world of difference! For questions, contact Arleen Lichtenstein, alichtenstein@tbanj.org or 973-994-3950. Cost to join is \$50 for Temple members and \$72 for non-members.

JLP MADRICHIM IN TRAINING (MIT PROGRAM)

The MIT program helps young adults entering 8th-12th grade gain valuable leadership skills and teaching experience while helping the JLP implement a warm and nurturing education program for our younger children. MIT's have the opportunity to work independently with younger students and as a member of the teaching staff. They are helpers, assistant teachers and friends! MITs will learn various teaching techniques and receive concrete practical life experience. MITs have the ability to encourage a new generation of students to recognize the value of giving back to the community and staying involved in Jewish life. Students ages 13-14 are given positions on a volunteer basis. Upon turning 15, MITs are eligible to receive pay. This is a wonderful chance to give back, build a resume, and stay involved in Jewish life! Madrichim are needed for all grade levels (K-6) on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. If you would like to make a difference, please contact Melissa Weiner, Director of Jewish Learning at 973-994-3950 or mweiner@tbanj.org.



B'NAI BRITH YOUTH ORGANIZATION

Throughout BBYO's 90 year history, the organization has brought leadership training, community service opportunities, Jewish education, a connection to Israel, and positive identity to thousands of Jewish youth in North America and beyond. Although the structure may differ depending upon the needs and design of the Jewish population, the basis is the same; BBYO provides fun and meaningful Jewish experiences for Jewish teens everywhere. BBYO has always been the world's leading pluralistic Jewish youth movement. As the first and the most dynamically inclusive organization of its kind, every Jewish teen, of all backgrounds, anywhere in the world, will find an experience that provides the foundation for a meaningful Jewish life. Proudly housed at TBA, contact Claudia Minde at cminde@tbanj.org

PARENTS ARE TEACHERS TOO

HORIM, MORIM

Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan stated that
“...to educate a child without educating the parent, like heating a room with the window open.”

Parent Education Days TBD

The Religious Education Program firmly believes that Jewish Learning is a life-long endeavor. With that in mind, we are pleased invite our parents on a regular basis to participate in special days with their children. At least one day a year, each grade level has a PACT (Parent and Children Together) program. Please check the school calendar to reserve these special days. Classes are lead by Rabbi Vaisberg, Rabbinic Intern Max Edwards and Education Director, Melissa Weiner.

Class Services TBD

Each year, every grade level participates in at least one grade level Shabbat program to help our students acclimate to the experience of participating in and leading a service. The prayers covered in class will be presented in a joyful and meaningful way from the bima. Please check the school calendar to reserve these special days.

Congregational Learning

Many adults are also looking for an opportunity to enrich their Jewish learning, and perhaps gain a refresher that might help them as they guide their children on this wonderful Jewish journey. Throughout the year, classes are taught by our clergy, educators, wonderful guest teachers and scholars, all who are eager to share their passion for Judaism. We are also delighted to welcome community members to attend our classes, and are proud to offer classes all year round. You can join us once or many times—the choice is yours, and we encourage you to let the year 5780 be rich with learning. Some offerings include: Parashat HaShavuah, Book Groups, Lunch and Learn, and Sisterhood Rosh Hodesh. For more information, please consult the TBA Congregational Learning link on the tbanj.org website.





HOME & HERE BRIT: A SPECIAL COVENANT

Pirkei Avot instructs all Jews to “get a teacher.” A child’s first teacher is his or her parent. Judaism begins in the home. At TBA, we regard our relationship to parents as an essential partnership capable of encouraging our children to succeed, and develop a positive relationship to Jewish values, rituals, and community. Throughout the year, classes will have Parent Participation Days and School Events. We encourage your full participation in these cherished moments of learning. Our doors and classrooms are always open to you, please just contact your child to let them know you will be coming. Here are additional practices you can assume to make our educational program even more successful:

- + Stress the need for regular attendance
- + Encourage a positive attitude towards religious education.
- + PRACTICE HEBREW AT LEAST 5 MINUTES 3-4 times a week!
- + Help with special projects.
- + Make sure your child is on time and prepared.
- + Encourage your child to work to the best of his/her ability.
- + Become familiar with our school and curriculum.
- + Share in Jewish experiences with your children on a regular basis at home, in the synagogue and in the community.
- + Don’t be a stranger! We are committed to ongoing dialogue with parents.
- + Please become an active partner in your child’s Jewish education.

In addition, please know that our doors and ears are always open. We pride ourselves in being a compassionate and warm community. The clergy, staff, and teachers want to be made aware of how best to help your child. If your child has an IEP, a special learning style, emotional challenges, or difficult life circumstances of which we should know, please reach out. The information will be held in the strictest confidence. In addition to each of the educational components of our school, we want to make sure that the children (and their families) know that they are valued and supported by their community.

This and That: Policies and Procedures

Zeh v'Zeh



Allergy Policy

All JLP events are "nut free". We also ask our families to refrain from sending ANY outside snacks into our building to ensure the safety of all our learners.

Attendance Policy

Attendance records are kept in the JLP office. In the event your child will be absent from the JLP, please notify the school office by phone on the day of the absence or by sending an e-mail to bsmall@tbanj.org. Please notify the office in the event of an extended absence by letter or e-mail.

Class Assignments

Class assignments begin in August. Please note, students are granted ONE MUTUAL REQUEST in their Judaic classes only. Hebrew pods are formed by skill set, so even if your child and their friend are attending at the same time, they are not guaranteed to be in the same classroom.

Discipline

Learners are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times, to cooperate with teachers and not to disrupt the class. The first infraction of these rules will result in the student being sent to the Educational Director's office. The second infraction requires the parent being notified. The third infraction requires a parent/guardian-student-director conference. A fourth infraction requires the parent to pick up the student immediately with further consequences to be determined by the Educational Director, Rabbi and the School Committee.

Emergency Closing

In the event that the Livingston Township Public Schools close, dismiss early, or cancel after school activities, the JLP will be closed. All families will be notified of closures via email. Postings will be made on our Facebook as well as the synagogue website (tbanj.org). If you are in doubt, call the school office (973) 994-3950 ext: 295. The JLP voice mail message will indicate the latest information regarding school closings.

Lateness and Early Dismissal

When students arrive late or leave class early instructional time is shortened and the classroom dynamics are disrupted for both teachers and students. Parents are required to come to the JLP office to sign their child out before the student may leave the class.

Prayers

Practicing at home can sometimes seem daunting when you do not know the tunes and need some Hebrew reading support. Cantor Epstein has taken the guesswork out of the task by posting all the prayers for you at TBANJ.ORG/AUDIOFILES. Be sure to visit for any help!

Progress Evaluations

Reviews of Judaic classroom achievements are issued at the beginning of January and at the closing of the year. Your child's Mercaz Ivrit teacher will issue a mid-year evaluation for your child.

Seventh Grade Attendance

Students who intend to have their Bar and Bat Mitzvah training and/or service are required to attend the seventh grade year. Families are asked to sign a commitment form, indicating their understanding of the seventh grade policy to continue the commitment through the seventh grade year.

Transfer Policy for New Gimel - Mechinah Students

Prospective students will have their Hebrew reading ability evaluated before placed in a Hebrew class. If the student's Hebrew reading is at grade level, he or she will be placed in the appropriate age and grade level class. If the student is not reading at grade level, Temple B'nai Abraham will do its best to quickly help a child catch up to be at grade level. To that end, a parent may secure private tutoring to assist in the transition.

Tutoring Policy

All students are expected to practice their Hebrew at home. The staff of our program will work with each child to achieve proficiency during our program. If a student still has difficulty in achieving the Hebrew reading goals because of attendance or lack of work outside the JLP hours, a tutor from the Temple B'nai Abraham teaching staff may be recommended for private tutoring at the parent's expense. The goals for students needing private tutoring are determined by the child's classroom teacher in conjunction with the JLP Director and the family.

Tzedakah

We encourage our students to perform the mitzvah of helping those who are less fortunate by bringing in tzedakah money. The students choose which charities to support each year through various presentations.

Website

In addition to viewing the calendar and upcoming events, visit this site www.tbanj.org/thejewish-learning-program to practice prayers, study what you missed in the event of an absence, and communicate with our school. You can also like us on Facebook at [https:// www.facebook.com/tbanjjewishlearningprogram](https://www.facebook.com/tbanjjewishlearningprogram).

How to Reach Us: Contact List

The Jewish Learning Program of Temple B'nai Abraham (K-12)

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Office Administrator: Brenda Small, bsmall@tbanj.org

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