



Jewish Student Connection 2011–12 Evaluation Findings

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BTW *informing change* (BTW) partners with nonprofits and foundations to improve their effectiveness and build a culture of learning and continuous improvement through strategic planning, evaluation and applied research. For more information about this project or BTW, contact Ellen Irie at erie@btw.informingchange.com or visit www.btw.informingchange.com.

Introduction

JSC Expansion Evaluation

Jewish Student Connection (JSC) aims to serve as a catalyst for Jewish teens to take ownership of their Jewish future. JSC carries out its work through in-school educational experiences for teens in public schools. JSC's student-run clubs provide opportunities for teens to build community with fellow Jewish students, learn about Jewish history and Israel, and gain access to the Jewish community outside their high school.

Three national and regional funders engaged BTW *informing change* (BTW) to assess the programmatic and organizational growth of JSC's program in four regions (i.e., Chicago, South Florida, Westchester/Connecticut and Denver) from 2010 through 2012. See Appendix A for brief descriptions of the regions.

This document presents findings from two evaluation questions:

1. How and to what extent has JSC enhanced participants' understanding of what it means to them to be Jewish, developed their connection to Israel and engaged them in the greater Jewish community?
2. To what extent is JSC reaching Jewish teens, and what are the characteristics of those teens?

During the time period covered by this evaluation, the organization and its clubs were known as Jewish Student Union, or JSU. Effective July 1, 2012, the name of the organization and its clubs formally changed to Jewish Student Connection, or JSC. Therefore, we use JSC in this report to reflect the current situation, although all data collection for the evaluation was conducted using the name Jewish Student Union and JSU.

JSC Expansion Theory of Change

PURPOSE: To serve as a catalyst for teens to take ownership of their Jewish future.

PROBLEMS

- Most Jewish teens do not have ready access to:
 - fun, safe and engaging spaces to explore what being Jewish means to them, in their own terms
 - fun, safe and engaging spaces to learn about and develop personal connections with Israel
 - opportunities to connect Jewishly with Jewish peers
 - compelling Jewish role models
- There are not sufficient compelling Jewish educational opportunities that engage teens
- Organizations serving Jewish teens do not collaborate effectively and do not reach as many teens as are interested in exploring their Jewish identity
- Some Jewish teens do not see Jewish involvement as cool or fun
- Public schools are often not seen as places for teens to explore and connect Jewishly

STRATEGIES

Program Level

- Build JSC clubs in public high schools
- Forge mentoring relationships between students and JSC staff
- Develop local and national partnerships between JSC and organizations in the Jewish community
- Facilitate connections between students and opportunities in the greater Jewish community both locally and nationally
- Develop partnerships with faculty and school leadership

Organizational Level

- Identify regions appropriate for JSC clubs
- Launch JSC clubs in new regions
- Implement staff training, recruitment and retention efforts
- Strengthen JSC's infrastructure to support expansion regions

TARGET CONSTITUENCIES

- Public high school students
- Public schools with a significant number of Jewish students
- Jewish organizations

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Program Level

- More Jewish teens:
 - participating in JSC clubs
 - with greater understanding of Judaism and Jewish life
 - with strengthened connection to, more knowledge about and comfort discussing Israel
 - making choices informed by their JSC experiences
 - active in Jewish activities
- Wider circles of Jewish friends among JSC participants
- Stronger relationships between JSC and public schools
- Created connections between JSC advisors and Jewish organizations and professionals

Organizational Level

- Increased number of active JSC clubs
- Increased JSC staff capacity
- Improved JSC infrastructure and capacity to support expansion regions
- Developed a plan for a viable organizational model that can sustain expansion
- Stronger local infrastructure

MID-TERM OUTCOMES

Program Level

- Continuation of short-term outcomes
- Deep, lasting relationships between JSC teens and partner organizations
- More former JSC teens in ongoing and immersive Jewish experiences during and after high school
- Enhanced Jewish community within participating public schools

Organizational Level

- Increased number of active JSC clubs
- Fully developed JSC staff capacity
- Solidified JSC infrastructure and capacity to support expansion regions
- Fully staffed and financially viable operations in expansion regions
- Produced a compendium of best practices for building and supporting program capacity and growth

ULTIMATE IMPACT: JSC has bridged the gap between a parent-imposed Jewish childhood ("you are Jewish") to a proud self-chosen Jewish adulthood ("I am Jewish"), with thousands of JSC alumni living as engaged Jewish adults.

Club Characteristics 2011–12

All four regions increased the number of JSC clubs from 2010 to 2012.

- Since the start of the evaluation, the overall number of clubs has increased from 18 to 45, including a 67% increase in the past year from 27 to 45 clubs across the four regions.
- South Florida had the biggest increases from the 2010–11 to the 2011–12 school year, growing from 6 to 15 clubs at the end of 2011–12. Westchester/Connecticut also tripled its number of clubs.
- Denver and Westchester/Connecticut reached their benchmarks, but the other regions fell just short of their June 2012 benchmarks.

Exhibit 1
Number of JSC Clubs
 Source: JSC tracking data

Region	As of June 2010*	As of June 2011*	As of June 2012*	June 2012 Benchmark
Chicago	13	14	16	17
South Florida	4	6	15	18
Westchester/ Connecticut	1	3	9	8
Denver	0	4	5	5

* Data as of June 2010, June 2011 and June 2012 are based on counts collected and provided by JSC staff. BTW staff are not able to confirm these values with other sources.

JSC club meetings are loud, lively events that teens are excited to come to.

- From the time teens walk in the door for a club meeting until they leave, they are talking with one another, their club advisor and their faculty advisor. Several teens seek out the JSC advisor to talk about their latest Jewish-related accomplishment or to ask for advice.
- Teens talk to their friends, parents and other Jewish organizational leaders about how much they like JSC and how excited they are about it. This excitement not only keeps JSC strong in existing schools, but also helps with expanding to new schools. Teens hear how much their friends like JSC, and then decide to establish a club at their own school.
- This socialization and excitement is also important for achieving several of JSC's goals:



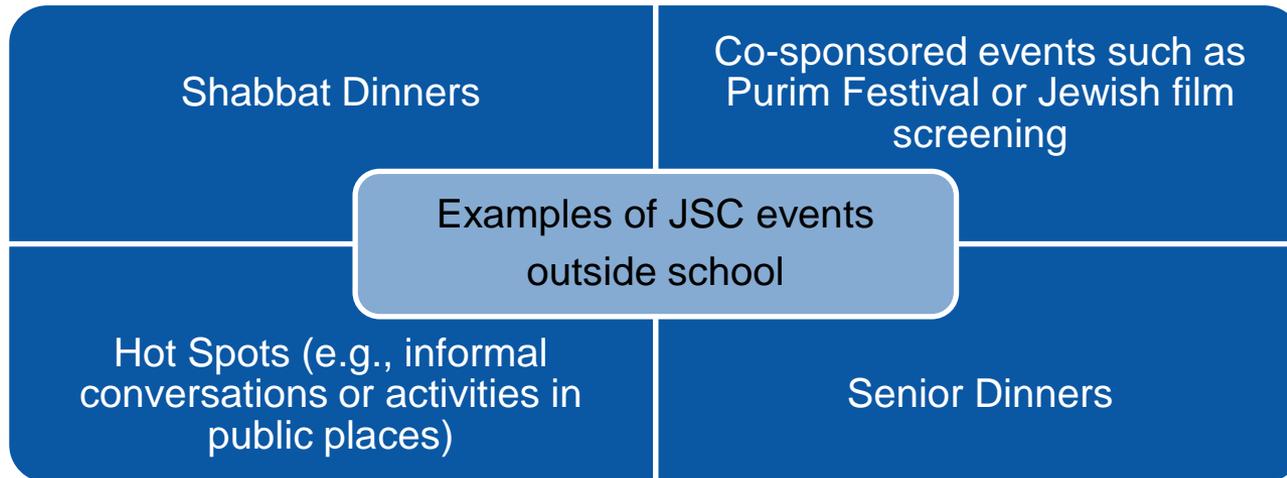
JSC clubs look different from school to school and region to region, responding to what works best for each individual club.

- Clubs are held at different non-instructional times of the day—before, during or after school—depending on what is allowed by or what works best for a particular school. Regardless of when it is held during the day, it is always during non-instructional times such as lunch or during the school’s club meeting time. The time when club is held has implications on how advisors structure the meeting. For example, clubs that meet during school hours may have fewer conflicts with after school sports or drama clubs, allowing more students to come, but they may have firmer start and end times, making it harder for teens to linger and talk with the club advisor after meetings.
- Clubs also meet with different frequencies, again depending on what works best for a particular school and advisor. Some clubs meet once a week while others meet every other week. Occasionally meetings are cancelled or rescheduled due to school conflicts. These differences affect how much time advisors can spend developing deeper connections with teens.
- While the teens are generally excited about and engaged in the activities, club advisors caution that programming that works well in one club may not work as well in other clubs. Students in each club react differently to program content; a deep discussion that occurs at one club may not happen on the same level at another. Having the flexibility to adapt programming to each club has been important for expansion.
- Each region is at a different stage of development and operates in a different Jewish environment, which affects how their clubs run. See Appendix A for more information on each region.
- Even with the differences between clubs, the underlying essential elements of JSC are similar across schools, allowing the regions to work together to develop this national club model.

JSC is expanding outside of the regular club meeting time.

During this past year, advisors in all regions worked on expanding JSC beyond just a club that meets at a set time. This allows teens who cannot make it to regular club meetings to still be involved in their school's JSC club.

- Clubs are now holding events outside of normal meeting times, often bringing together teens from different schools.
- JSC co-sponsors many of these events with other local Jewish organizations. This allows teens to spend more time with their JSC advisors and club members while still participating in other Jewish activities.



Teens Participating in JSC

All four regions increased the number of teen club attendees in 2012, exceeding over half of their benchmarks.

Exhibit 2
JSC Attendance
 Source: JSC tracking data

	Region	As of June 2011*	As of June 2012*	June 2012 Benchmark
Total number of unique teens	Chicago	936	1,148	1,500
	South Florida	456	763	600
	Westchester/Connecticut	179	305	215
	Denver	^	191	200
Number of consistent attendees	Chicago	211	531	500
	South Florida	84	310	200
	Westchester/Connecticut	32	65	100
	Denver	^	101	75

• Data as of June 2011 and June 2012 were collected and provided by JSC staff. BTW staff are not able to confirm these values with other sources.

^ JSC tracking data for Denver were not available for June 2011.

The people and activities at JSC club meetings are the main reasons teens come through the door.

- Teens are attracted to JSC by the people in it—their current friends and other Jewish teens in their school. They hear from others that it is a fun place to be and want to see for themselves. This reflects the student-run approach of JSC, with student leaders taking responsibility for growing club membership.
- Teens also like the activities at meetings and the chance to do something Jewish. Since many of the reasons why teens continue coming are similar to the reasons why they initially came, it seems that JSC club meetings are meeting and exceeding teens' expectations.
- Although just 32% of teens report they initially come to meetings because of the club advisor, the top reason why they continue coming is because they like their advisor.

Top Reasons Teens Initially Come to JSC

(N=305)
Source: BTW survey

- I wanted to be involved in an extracurricular activity – 60%
- It sounded fun – 59%
- My friends were coming – 56%
- It was a convenient way to do something Jewish – 52%

Top Reasons Teens Continue to Come to JSC

(N=305)
Source: BTW survey

- I like my club advisor – 69%
- Being with my friends – 67%
- Being with Jewish teens in my school – 55%
- The activities at club meetings – 52%

JSC attracts teens from different religious backgrounds, not only Jewish teens.

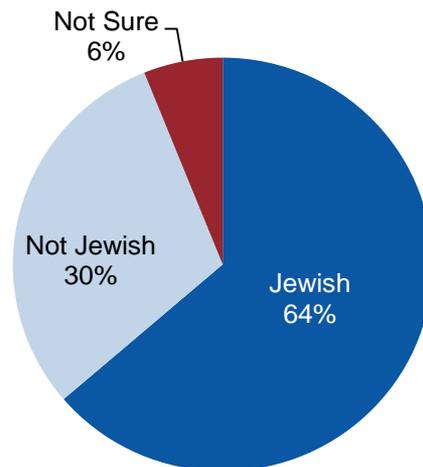
- That JSC is open to anyone—any Jewish denomination as well as non-Jewish teens—is acknowledged and appreciated by club members, JSC club advisors and the broader Jewish community in each region. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of JSC compared to other Jewish teen programs.
- Across regions, 36% of teen respondents report that they are either not Jewish or not sure. In Denver, the percentage is higher at 51%, while in Westchester/Connecticut, the percentage is lower at 22%.
- 12% of teens report coming from interfaith families.
- Among teens who identify as Jewish, nearly all say they come from Jewish families.

Exhibit 3

JSC Teens' Religious Identity

N=490

Source: BTW survey



JSC's membership is evenly split between boys and girls and across all of the high school grade levels.

- JSC attracts as many boys as girls, which is a particular success because many Jewish youth programs struggle to attract teenage boys.
- By reaching teens in all grade levels, JSC can benefit from the maturity and leadership of the upperclassmen. From the underclassmen, JSC can benefit by retaining them year to year and developing deeper relationships with them.

Exhibit 4
Gender of JSC Teens
N=307
Source: BTW survey

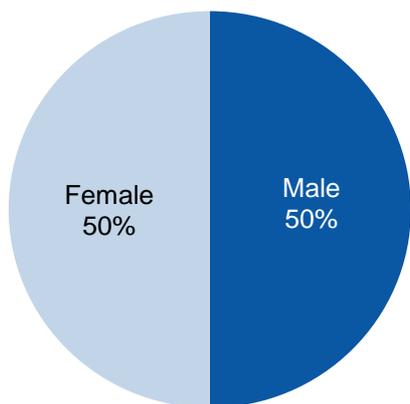
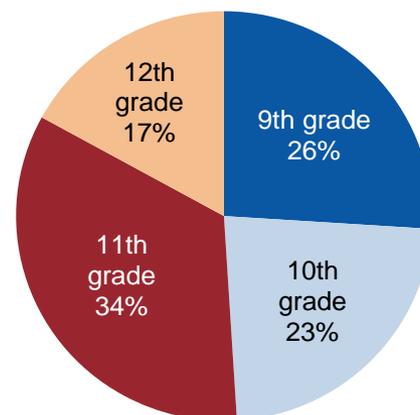


Exhibit 5
Grade Level of JSC Teens
N=308
Source: BTW survey



Many club members are new to JSC, but they come to club meetings regularly.

- The majority of club members have been participating in JSC for 1 year or less.
- About three-quarters of teen respondents say they come to club meetings most of the time, allowing them to benefit from the full program as it unfolds at their schools.

Exhibit 6
Participation in JSC
N=305
Source: BTW survey

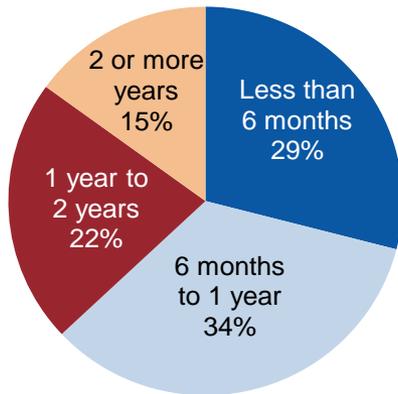
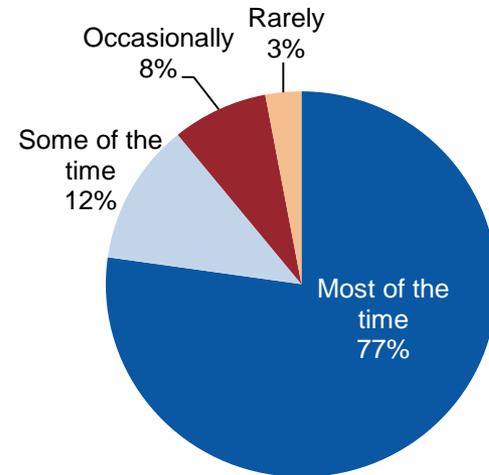
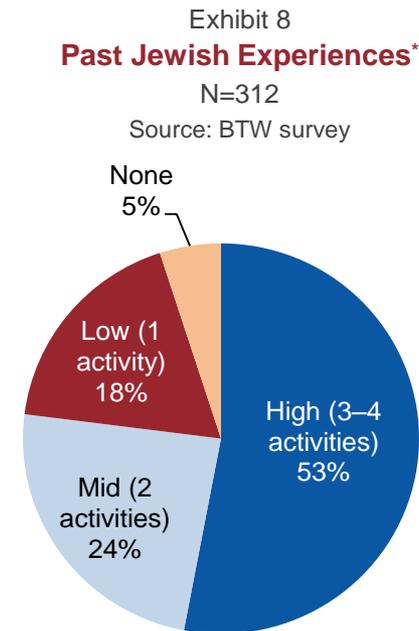


Exhibit 7
Attendance at Club Meetings
N=308
Source: BTW survey



The majority of club members had multiple noteworthy Jewish experiences before joining JSC.

- Overall, 53% of teens were classified as having high levels of past Jewish experiences, defined as having done at least three of the following four activities: bar/bat mitzvah, Jewish overnight camp, Jewish day school and Israel trip.
- 87% of all teens had a bar/bat mitzvah.
- Denver teens were least likely to have been Israel (31% compared to 49% aggregate across all regions) or attend Jewish day school (40% compared to 56% aggregate across all regions). These differences contributed to a smaller percentage of Denver teens classified as having high levels of past Jewish experiences (37%).
- South Florida teens were most likely to have attended day school (68% compared to 56% aggregate across all regions).
- All Westchester/Connecticut teens experienced at least one of the activities; no one was classified as “none.”



* Teens were classified as having one of four levels of past Jewish experiences (high, mid, none and low) based on their responses to four items (see Appendix C for more information).

Many club members are classified as having mid-levels of *current* Jewish engagement.

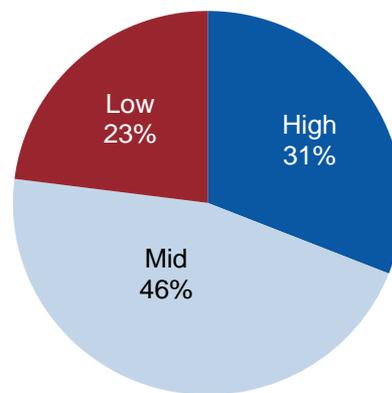
- All teens were classified as having some level of current Jewish engagement outside of JSC; no one was coded as having “none.”
- 46% of teens were classified as having mid levels of current Jewish engagement. Typically for these teens:
 - Most of their close friends are Jewish
 - They participate in Jewish-related activities (other than JSC) twice a month or more
 - They participate in three or four other Jewish-related activities (e.g., synagogue services or a chavurah; Jewish classes, Hebrew High or other Jewish educational opportunities; synagogue youth group; Jewish-based service-learning, social justice or volunteer program; Jewish overnight camp)

Exhibit 9

Current Jewish Engagement

N=312

Source: BTW survey



* Teens were classified as having one of four levels of current Jewish engagement (high, mode, none and low) based on their responses to four items (see Appendix C for more information).

JSC's Influence on Teens

For many teens, JSC is helping to shape their Jewish journeys.

Reflecting on the 2011–12 program year, many teens report that they have deepened their knowledge about Judaism and Israel, extended their Jewish network and increased their involvement in other Jewish activities since they have been involved in JSC (see the following slides for more detailed findings on each of the five benchmarks below).

Exhibit 10
Teen Benchmarks^{*^}
 Source: BTW survey

June 2012 Benchmark	Chicago	South Florida	Westchester/ Connecticut	Denver	Aggregate
60% of participants report a positive change in their understanding of Judaism and Jewish life	63%	63%	54%	75%	63%
60% of participants report increased connection to, knowledge about and comfort discussing Israel	59%	58%	49%	52%	56%
60% of participants report an increase in making Jewish choices	35%	36%	25%	36%	35%
Most participants report an increase in the number of their Jewish friends	50%	56%	37%	61%	52%
35% of participants report that they participate in activities with Jewish organizations due to their JSC experience	57%	56%	47%	48%	54%

* Percentages are averages based on multiple survey items addressing each benchmark.

^ Bolded percentages indicate benchmarks that are met.

JSC club activities increase teens' understanding of Judaism and Jewish life.

- Across five survey items, nearly all teens report that their interest and knowledge in Judaism and Jewish life has increased, or at least stayed the same, since being in JSC.
- JSC provides a fun environment that allows teens to explore Judaism and Jewish life while maintaining or, for many, expanding their previous Jewish knowledge, interest and involvement.
- More teens classified as “low” on their past Jewish experience score report increased interest in learning more about Judaism (85%) compared to teens classified as “mid” (65%) or “high” (68%). Also, Jewish and non-Jewish teens report similar levels of increased interest in this area (71% and 74%, respectively).

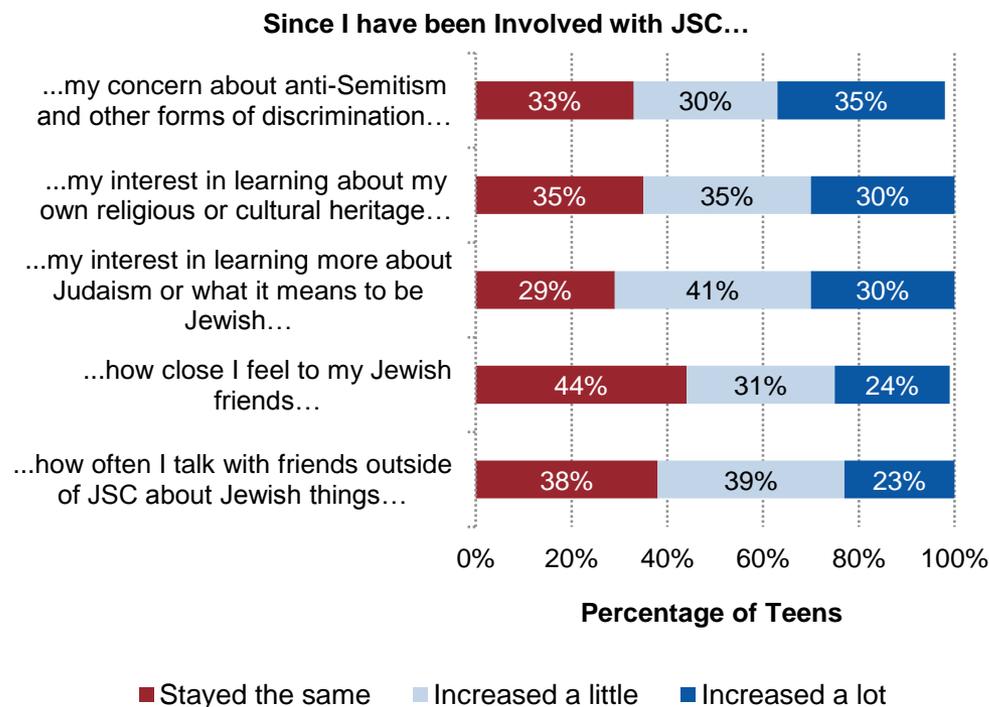
“YOJO (You're only Jewish once)”

—JSC Teen

Exhibit 11
**Changes in Teens' Understanding of
 Judaism and Jewish life**

N=275–280

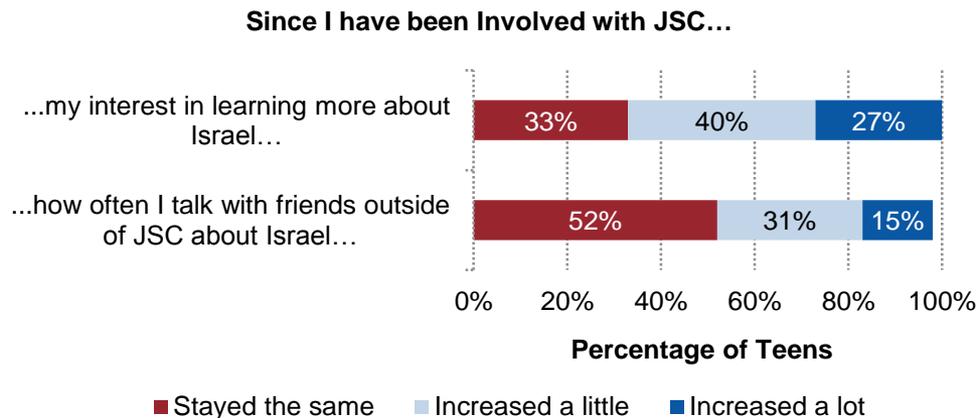
Source: BTW survey



Being able to learn about and discuss topics related to Israel during JSC club meetings is an attraction for many teens.

- Since being in JSC, the majority of teens report a greater interest in learning about Israel and many are also making behavioral changes by talking about Israel with their friends more often.
- JSC club meetings provide an opportunity for teens to learn about both past and current events in Israel's history and culture. During site visits, teens mentioned how much they value this opportunity that is often not provided, or provided in a more limited format, in their regular school curriculum.
- More teens who have high levels of current Jewish engagement report an increase in how often they talk with their friends about Israel (60%) compared to teens who have low levels (44%) and mid levels (38%).

Exhibit 12
Changes in Teens' Knowledge About & Comfort Discussing Israel
N=266–267
Source: BTW survey



About one-third of teens report making more Jewish-related choices in their daily lives since being in JSC.

- Among the Jewish-related choices that teens **can** make on a regular basis are what they wear, listen to and read. Since being in JSC, one in three students reports increases in how often they make Jewish-related choices in these three areas, thereby choosing to publically display their Jewishness to their peers.
- One-third of teens say that they more often celebrate Shabbat and the Jewish holidays with their family, and 41% report increases in how often they celebrate with their friends since being in JSC.

“Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think: of how easy it is to assimilate Jewish activities into my everyday life. I wear my Kippah proudly on my head, and I am happy to be Jewish.”

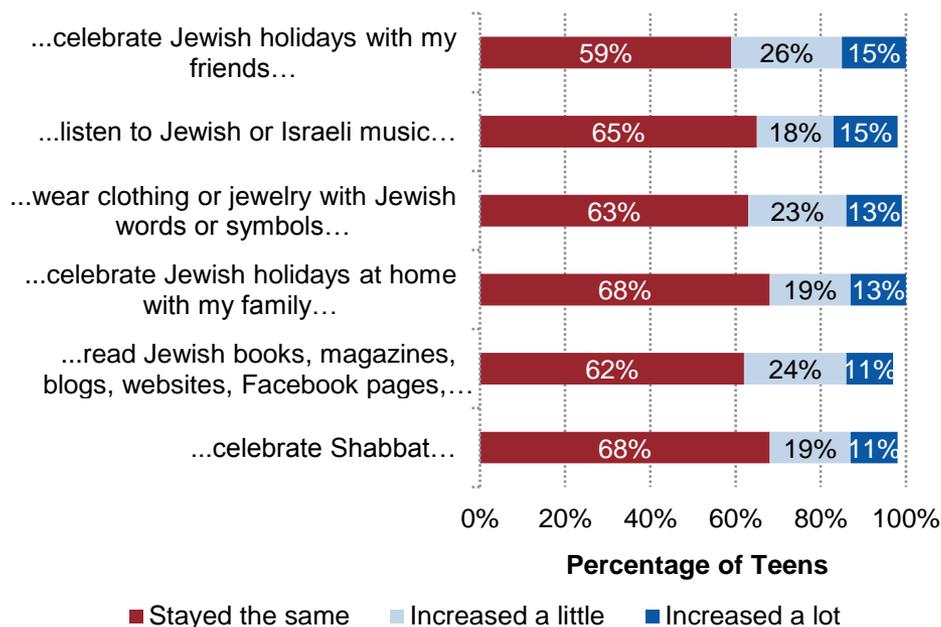
—JSC Teen

Exhibit 13
Changes in Teens’ Frequency of Making Jewish Choices

N=275–280

Source: BTW survey

Since I have been Involved with JSC, how often I...



JSC teens expand their existing circles of close Jewish friends.

- Over half of teen participants report that they have more close Jewish friends since being in JSC. JSC provides an environment for teens to meet other teens who they did not know were Jewish.
- JSC teens report that either some (45%) or most (43%) of their close friends are Jewish.

“Instead of not caring if I have Jewish friends, it matters to me more. I love having people I can go to synagogue with and celebrate the holidays with.”

—JSC Teen

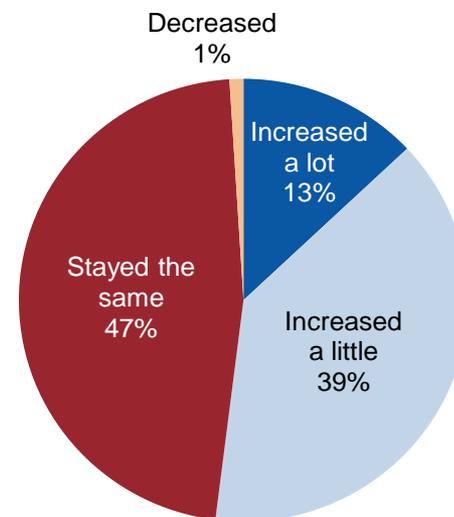
“They build friendships here. They say they meet kids they didn’t know were Jewish.”

—Advisor

Exhibit 14
Changes in the Number of Close Friends Who Are Jewish

N=283

Source: BTW survey



JSC teens participate in more Jewish-related activities.

- 55% of teens say they have increased their involvement in other Jewish-related activities since being in JSC. Their increased participation could be for a combination of reasons, including the following:
 - JSC provides an opportunity to learn about Jewish activities and organizations, which is why 42% report that they continue coming to club meetings.
 - Similar to the reasons why teens come to JSC, they go to other organizations and events because their friends and other teens they know will be going.
- Although the majority of teens report increases, all four regions fell short of their benchmarks for referrals. This could be a result of club advisors playing smaller roles in teens' decisions to attend other Jewish-related activities, referrals not being recorded in the data tracking system accurately, or a combination of both.

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONS TEENS ARE REFERRED TO

- AIPAC
- BBYO
- Hillel
- iCenter
- J-Serve
- March of the Living
- MASA
- NCSY
- NFTY
- USY
- Young Judea

Exhibit 15

Number of Teens Referred by Club Advisors to Other Jewish Organizations

Source: JSC Tracking Data

Region	As of June 2012*	June 2012 Benchmark
Chicago	147	175
South Florida	45	225
Westchester/Connecticut	15	125
Denver	11	75

* Data as of June 2012 are based on counts collected and provided by JSC staff. BTW staff are not able to confirm these values with other sources.

Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think...

"...how much of the culture I was missing out on"

"...amazing things that can't be quantified by words but experienced"

"...I have a story to tell about my religion"



"...that being Jewish is about learning about our history and being able to relate it to today's world"

"...about my family's past and culture, and why we celebrate what we do"

"...it means to have a very proud and historical culture that is relevant in today's world"



"...that I will go to Israel soon"

"...to understand Israel, the conflicts Israel is having/facing, understand your culture and history as well as tradition, to be proud of being Jewish."

"...it means to have a personal connection to Israel and its people."



Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think...

"...of unity and connection with our community teenagers"

"...of spending time with friends and learning about my religious culture"

"...being Jewish means being part of a community of people who share love and respect for each other and who aren't afraid to be a part of each other's everyday celebrations."



PRIDE

"...it means to be myself without hiding."

"...about how lucky I am about being a Jew and proud"

"...I think to be Jewish I feel honored/proud. I feel as though being Jewish we are all family"



"...L'dor V'dor. We're connected to our ancestors."

"...of appreciating the values of Jewish culture and have fun while doing it."

"...of my ancestors and what they went through, and what lead them to believe in what they believe in."



JSC alumni report positive experiences and continued involvement in Jewish-related activities since being in JSC.

- 95%** of JSC alumni (i.e., high school graduates who participated in JSC) report participating in ongoing, immersive Jewish experiences after high school.*
- 79%** report that JSC had a somewhat or significantly positive influence on their decisions about participating in Jewish-related activities.
- 48%** have communicated with their advisor since high school. These alumni report that the communication is through various methods including Facebook, e-mail and phone calls as well as in person; however, communication does not occur very often.

“Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think: of youth leadership and taking active responsibility to do what I can to strengthen the Jewish community, both around me and far.”

—JSC Alumnus/Alumna

“Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think: being Jewish should always be a part of my life.”

—JSC Alumnus/Alumna

* Survey responses were only received from a small selection (n=80) of the approximately 500 JSC alumni. We recommend caution when interpreting these findings as representative of all JSC alumni.

JSC club advisors appeal to teens and are influencing their lives.

- The club advisor is the number one reason teens say they continue coming to JSC (69%). The club advisor is a Jewish role model for many teens.
- Most teens (80%) say they communicate with their advisors outside club time, generally through Facebook or e-mail. Some teens turn to their advisors for advice on serious life issues (e.g., college decisions, alcohol use, pregnancy, suicide) on which the advisors could provide their Jewish perspective.
- JSC club advisors mentored hundreds of students in 2011–12.

Exhibit 16

Number of Teens Mentored by Club Advisors*

Source: JSC tracking data

Region	As of June 2012 [^]	June 2012 Benchmark
Chicago	105	150
South Florida	118	75
Westchester/ Connecticut	83	40
Denver	27	10

* For the 2011–12 program year, BTW and JSC staff agreed that a “mentored” student is one who receives two or more of the following out-of-club mentoring supports from a JSC advisor: 1) going to an advisor’s house; 2) having a one-on-one conversation about personal topics such as dating, religious views, college, etc.; 3) attending a student’s school event such as a concert, play, sports event, etc.; 4) talking about a current topic in the news; and 5) helping a student with schoolwork.

[^] Data as of June 2012 are based on counts collected and provided by JSC staff. BTW staff are not able to confirm these values with other sources.

CLUB ADVISORS – WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Run a weekly calendar of club meetings
- Organize and support teen leaders for each club
- Research and design new program activities for club meetings
- Recruit outside speakers for club meetings
- Visit schools & other youth groups to reach out to current & potential JSC members
- Identify and recruit student leaders to start new clubs; help students recruit faculty sponsors
- Meet with school officials about current and new clubs
- Build or maintain good relationships with other Jewish community groups with connections to Jewish teens
- Occasionally work on community-wide Jewish events and participate in other Jewish youth organizations' programs and retreats

"I call [the JSC club advisors] visionaries. They're able to see what affects kids; they have insight and experience that we really value. [Maybe] it's because they see kids in a different environment, on their own turf at school, not like us seeing them [at a specific organization] or in synagogue. [JSC staff] are immersed in the kids' world and they are perceptive, so...they soak it up."

—Jewish Organization Professional

"The JSC staff have terrific skills for working with youth. They are strong facilitators, they do creative programming. They are all highly qualified in terms of content. They have different backgrounds but are grounded in deep education skills."

—Jewish Organization Professional

JSC clubs contribute to a stronger Jewish community in the schools.

- There is a growing sense of a strong Jewish community in the high schools with JSC clubs, although it may be that these are schools that already had strong Jewish communities and, thus, were already more likely to adopt JSC. Jewish teens and their friends have a place to come together for hanging out and learning about Israel and their Jewish heritage.
- A few club members and their advisors have worked with school administrators to reschedule school events that fell during the Jewish holidays. A few clubs have also organized larger school-wide events such as a convocation on the Holocaust.
- Some clubs have also begun participating in their school's club fair or club rush—an event held to publicize the club's activities and recruit new students.

“Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think: mostly being Jewish and being with other teenagers from my school and being with them all the time.”

—JSC Teen

“Now, when I think of what it means to be Jewish, I think: how now that I no longer go to a Jewish school, I am happy to be involved in a Jewish club at school.”

—JSC Teen

JSC has positive relationships with local partner organizations.

- Almost all **Jewish community professionals** say that it is to their organization's benefit to have a free, open club available to Jewish teens in public schools on a regular basis. Partner organizations continue to be supportive of the JSC club concept but express less confidence that JSC will generate increased teen participation in other Jewish youth organizations. Representatives of partner organizations appear to closely track the number of JSC clubs and the schools they are in. A few community professionals say they would like to see a more diverse team of JSC advisors so that the staffing matches the JSC credo of welcoming youth of all denominations.
- **BBYO** staff continue to appreciate JSC staff as colleagues and thought partners, working toward shared goals. The national level BBYO-JSC partnership spurs local BBYO staff to pursue joint activities with JSC. However, local BBYO staff are adjusting their earlier expectation that JSC clubs will generate significant numbers of new members for them and are giving more attention to cooperative programming (e.g., joint events).
- **JSC club advisors** are satisfied with the variety and depth of their organizational partnerships. Some are beginning to examine the tension of breadth versus depth of the referrals that they offer teens. They are aware that the quality of a referral depends on how well they know the other programs and the follow-up they can do after the initial referral. This becomes more difficult with a larger number of organizational partnerships.

JSC staff serve as resources for the broader Jewish community in their areas.

- JSC staff have or are developing reputations among other Jewish organizational professionals as valued resources for youth programming, Jewish education, and community events (for example, recruiting youth participants for a city-wide March of the Living or organizing teen volunteers for a JCC holiday event).
 - JSC staff also develop and deliver programming for partner groups, such as speaking at a denominational youth retreat or leading a program for a BBYO group.
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Appendices

Descriptions of the Four Expansion Regions

Regional context influences the regional priorities for capacity development. The tenure of prior JSC staff and clubs in the area, the concentration of Jewish families and the social-political environment reflected by the public schools have considerable influence over the progress of infrastructure development in each region.

- The **Chicago** region has had more infrastructure in place than the other three regions because of its longer history of JSC clubs, as well as having had the benefit of significant in-kind support from the NCSY Midwest regional office. At this point, the regional director is cautious about creating additional clubs until the region can further expand staff and local fund development. JSC has been sharing office space with the NCSY Midwest regional office, with access to administrative support from NCSY.
- In **South Florida**, the high concentration of Jewish families and Jewish teens in public high schools has created a very high demand for more clubs across a large geographic area where faith-based clubs on school campuses are common occurrences. Regional staff have many opportunities to open clubs and recruit teens. There is limited administrative support in South Florida.
- **Westchester/Connecticut** is characterized by scattered pockets of Jewish teens in public high schools that have a competitive academic atmosphere and parents who have high interest in their children's extracurricular activities. Regional staff try to balance building clubs with building community relationships. Housed in the national JSC office, the staff in this region have access to administrative and moral support from the national staff team.
- **Denver** has a smaller population of Jewish families and teens than the other regions and is envisioned to be a one-person regional operation. By design, JSC in Denver will look slightly different from the other regions in which there are multiple JSC staff. There is no dedicated JSC office space or administrative support in Denver.

Methods

BTW collected data from multiple sources for this evaluation.

Key Informant Interviews: BTW conducted telephone and in-person interviews with a variety of individuals in both one-on-one and group settings, including:

- Teen participants in JSC clubs in the four regions (approximately 27)
- Public school faculty at club sites in the four regions (7)
- Representatives of other Jewish organizations (e.g., BBYO, synagogue youth groups, Israel gap year programs) in the four regions (11)
- JSC advisors in the four regions (10)
- National JSC staff (5)
- Chair of JSC Board of Directors (1)
- Members of the Advisory Board in Chicago, South Florida and Westchester/Connecticut (4)
- JSC funders (3)

Site Visits & Observations: BTW conducted site visits in the four regions to observe JSC clubs in action and interview club advisors, teens, school faculty and some Jewish professionals in partner organizations.

Materials Review: BTW reviewed JSC program materials and organizational plans.

Review of JSC Tracking Data: BTW reviewed and summarized select data collected by JSC advisors through two methods: 1) intake forms, administered to students during the school year, that ask teens about demographic information and their previous Jewish-related experiences (e.g., trips to Israel, summer camp, etc.), and 2) club meeting attendance tracking, recorded by advisors in a database throughout the school year.

Survey of JSC Teens: BTW prepared a paper survey that JSC club advisors administered during scheduled club time in March–May 2012. BTW also prepared an online version for clubs not meeting during this time period. Incentives were offered for participation.

- BTW attempted to survey all JSC clubs in all four regions, but some clubs did not respond.
- Other than a few instances that are specifically noted, data on non-Jewish teens participating in JSC clubs were excluded from the data analysis and do not appear in this deck.

Survey of JSC Alumni: BTW prepared and administered an online survey to high school graduates who had participated in JSC while they were in high school. The survey was open from April–May 2012. Incentives were offered for participation.

- Due to the limited number of responses, all survey respondents' results, regardless of Jewish identity or region, are included in this deck and the accompanying memo.

Determining Level of Past Jewish Experiences & Current Jewish Engagement

BTW created four categories of level of Jewish engagement—none, low, mid and high—and used multiple survey items to determine a teen’s level of past Jewish experiences and current Jewish engagement.

PAST JEWISH EXPERIENCES

- Teens were asked if they had experiences in four Jewish activities (i.e., bar/bat mitzvah, Jewish overnight camp, trip to Israel and Jewish day school) prior to participating in JSC. Teens who said “no” to all items were coded as 0, teens who said “yes” to one item were coded as 1, teens who said “yes” to two items were coded as 2 and teens who said “yes” to three or more items were coded as 3 (respectively described as none, low, mid and high).

CURRENT JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

- Teens were asked how often they participate in Jewish-related activities and how many close Jewish friends they have. These two items were asked on a four-point Likert scale, with each point coded as 0–3, progressively getting higher (i.e., the lowest point was coded as 0 and the highest point was coded as 3).
- Teens were asked about the number of Jewish-related activities they have participated in over the last year. Teens who did not select any activities were coded as 0, teens who selected one or two activities were coded as 1, teens who selected three or four activities were coded as 2 and teens who selected five or more activities were coded as 3.
- Coded scores for these three items were combined to determine a teen’s level of current Jewish engagement. A combined score could range from 0 (received 0s for all items) to 9 (received 3s for all items). Teens whose combined scores were 0 were classified as having no current Jewish engagement (none), teens whose scores ranged from 1–3 as having low levels, teens whose scores ranged from 4–6 as having mid levels, and teens whose scores ranged from 7–9 as having high levels.

Evaluation Strengths & Limitations

STRENGTHS

- This study used multiple methods to evaluate JSC's progress toward its benchmarks, which enabled BTW to triangulate findings to reach conclusions supported by more than just one data source. This gives BTW greater confidence in the findings and resulting recommendations.
- BTW visited multiple clubs in the four regions and spent a considerable amount of time talking with faculty advisors, JSC club advisors, students and Jewish professionals in the area. By being able to observe so many clubs and talk with so many individuals involved with JSC, we feel confident in our conclusions and their generalizations across clubs within a region and across regions, where applicable.

LIMITATIONS

- The number of completed surveys varied by region, limiting the analysis and conclusions we could make. Because of the wide range in the number of survey responses per region, we have refrained from making conclusions comparing regions.
- Teen surveys were administered late in the school year (i.e., March–May) when club attendance and the participation may have declined compared to earlier in the year.
- The alumni survey response rate was very low despite multiple attempts to reach participants by BTW and JSC staff. This limits the generalizability of these data and the conclusions we can make.
- The primary data sources used in this evaluation are self reported (i.e., surveys, interviews), which may present some bias.