

**10 Ideas to
Help Navigate a School Budget
In a Troubled Economy**
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1. ***Understand where your budget is today.*** With the changes in the economy, the income that you were depending on may be different from what is actually available to you. Talk to those who are responsible for keeping the financial records and be sure you are fully informed regarding the school.
2. ***Project educational costs for the end of the year.*** This can be an important step in planning for the year ahead and can also alert you to any mid-year adjustments that might have to be made.
3. ***Project enrollment and expected income for next year.*** It will help you make important decisions about financial needs.
4. ***Prioritize your educational programming.*** Make lists of what is necessary for educational excellence, what is secondary to educational excellence, and what could be sacrificed if needed without sacrificing educational excellence.
5. ***Be creative.*** Don't assume that the only way to provide a program is the way it has been done in the past. Can parents donate food or paper goods to a holiday program? Can In-Service training be offered using in-house staff? Can families purchase books next year instead of the synagogue providing these materials?
6. ***Communicate.*** Involve lay leadership responsible for the school and discuss what it would take to keep the school vibrant. Have conversations with faculty about the realities to be faced in the upcoming year. Be open to suggestions.
7. ***Keep the goal of educational excellence at the center of your decision-making.*** Jewish education is about our students and their families. All decisions made should benefit these important stakeholders.
8. ***Look for hidden money.*** Did you provide a program at less cost than expected? Use the savings for something else the school needs. Can you set up a fund for donations to the school? Parents and grandparents might want to honor students in your school on their birthdays or for an achievement. Is there a family in the congregation that would adopt a pet project? Can local vendors be solicited for contributions?
9. ***Keep your faculty supervision at a high level.*** If you need to make difficult faculty choices for next year, continued classroom observations and written evaluations should help guide these decisions.
10. ***Advocate for your school.*** Educate yourself about every aspect of school funding and spending, and defend what you know is needed!