



Students from Be'eri high schools visit the Hartman Institute to study

## Be'eri Program for Jewish-Israeli Identity Education



As part of its quest to create and implement initiatives that engage Jews around the world in a brand of Judaism and Zionism that holds contemporary significance for them, the Shalom Hartman Institute introduced the Be'eri program. This program serves as a resource center for educators in secular high schools across Israel, who in turn influence Israeli youth to embrace their Jewish-Israeli identity and by so doing reclaim their heritage.

The pluralistic, values-based Be'eri Jewish-Israeli identity education program enables students in secular Israeli high schools to reclaim ownership of their Jewish identity by presenting them with a Judaism that is meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. A resource center for high schools, Be'eri introduces hundreds of educators and tens of thousands of students throughout Israel to a multifaceted and diverse approach to Judaism.

Through the pursuit of Jewish values, concepts, and texts, Be'eri creates a critical shift in the personal and national identity of Israeli youth from a range of socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds, advancing their transformation into proud Jews and revealing to them—often for the first time—that there are many different and inspiring ways to be Jewish. The program instills in them a greatly enhanced sense of mission and an understanding that they are an integral part of a nation and its heritage, culture, and purpose.

The mission of the Be'eri program is to:

- Expand the breadth and depth of pluralistic Jewish-Israeli identity education among Israeli youth attending non-religious high schools
- Introduce secular Israelis—educators, students, parents, and the broader community—to a multifaceted, values-based approach to Judaism that is meaningful and relevant to their daily lives, enabling them to form a positive Jewish-Israeli identity and instilling in them a sense of democratic values
- Develop innovative informal educational methodologies that encourage educators, students, and parents to take Jewish, values-based social action

A holistic initiative, Be'eri stands above other programs aimed at strengthening pluralistic Jewish education due to the quality of its programming, the breadth of its reach, and a wide range of strategic partnerships that the program has fostered. Be'eri works closely with schools as well as governmental and municipal partners and other educational organizations from which it enjoys significant support. The quality of the Jewish educational experience afforded by Be'eri has earned the program national recognition, which includes support and certification from the Israeli Ministry of Education and partner municipalities.

## The Be'eri Ecosystem

### Be'eri Central Resource Center

- Pluralistic teaching curricula approved by the Ministry of Education
- *Tarbut Yisrael* website
- Informal educational initiatives: student leadership programs, materials, Batei Midrash

### Be'eri in Schools

- In 115 schools, influencing more than 90,000 students
- Supported by regional structures and facilitators who visit the schools regularly

### 8 Municipal Partnerships

supported by philanthropic partners

### Be'eri School for Teacher Education

- 2-year training courses for teachers and principals
- Regional branch in Be'er Sheva
- Bible Studies pedagogy course
- Municipal Teacher Leadership Initiative

Philanthropic partners and public partners, including Ministry of Education and municipal partners

SHI Scholarship

Profoundly influencing students, teachers, principals, parents, and municipal change agents, Be'eri now includes:

- 115 participating high schools, up from 95 in the 2011-12 school year
- More than 90,000 students involved in formal and informal *Tarbut Yisrael* programming
- 8 municipal partnerships—Haifa, Modi'in, Be'er Sheva, Karmiel, Nazareth Illit, Or Akiva, and the Golan and Hof HaCarmel regional councils
- Hundreds of educators enrolled in long- and short-term training at the Be'eri School for Teacher Education based in Jerusalem, with a new branch in Be'er Sheva that opened in October 2012. A dedicated pluralistic and interdisciplinary Ministry of Education–approved curriculum for grades 7, 8, and 10
- The new *Tarbut Yisrael* website, created in partnership with the Israel Center for Educational Technology, the AVI CHAI Foundation, and the Posen Foundation, serving as a resource center for educational materials that focus on strengthening pluralistic Jewish-Israeli heritage studies in the Israeli public realm
- Informal student leadership programs that are run in partnership with the Yaacov Herzog Center for Jewish Studies, the Midrasha at Oranim, BINA, and Roim Rahok and empower students to translate Jewish values into action

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I enjoyed a moment of satisfaction (*nachas*) this morning when I visited the Tichon Hadash school from which I graduated in 1984. I participated in a grade 11 Talmud class; I was impressed by both the teacher and the very engaged students. I was particularly pleased to learn that over 40 students in this class will major in Jewish oral law... The students expressed their satisfaction with the Be'eri program and indicated it as the reason that they decided to major in Talmud.

—Former Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar, Facebook, February 2012

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Gideon Sa'ar with Beeri students

Five Be'eri schools ranked among the top seven (including first and third place) in a Ministry of Education competition acknowledging top schools in *Tarbut Yisrael* (Jewish heritage) studies. These schools were honored at a ceremony in June 2012, which was led by the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Dalit Stauber, who is an alumna of Hartman programs.

Spotlight