



Mobilizing a Social Movement

Public calling to students and parents to choose excellence in middle school

December 3, 2020, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

True to its name, middle school is the transition stage between primary and high school. In primary school, the objective is clear – to learn the fundamentals. The goal in high school is straightforward as well: to prepare for the matriculation examinations. However, what is the purpose of middle school? The answer is still unclear and consequently, middle school is low on the list of priorities, classrooms are crowded, the curriculum is packed, children get lost along the way, and the gaps widen.

On the other hand, middle school children are at an age where they are forming their identity while building skills for their future. It is both a very individual and a very social age where they need the guiding hand of a responsible adult. However, in middle school many parents are less involved, in comparison to the primary school years. When their children arrive in high school, they will typically resume their push and support, but in middle school, they shift into sort of a wait mode.

There are parents and students who are aware of this vacuum. They do not accept the fate of inevitable gaps and search for a prestigious alternative. They find it in special magnet schools that come with admission requirements and they find it within regular schools in special classes and dedicated study tracks. In recent years, such excellence frameworks have begun to sprout, focusing mainly on mathematics and the sciences. However, these are available to only about 15% of the students.

Questions for discussion

1. How can we spark a momentum for students and parents to choose the excellence class option in middle school? What should be the call to action that will propel them?
2. Since there is more than one type of an excellence class, each with various titles and programs, how should we clarify for students and parents the choice at hand?
3. Would it be possible and advisable to articulate specific content that is included in an excellence class (abstract mathematics for university, or applied mathematics for high-tech) or is preferable to dim the difference under the halo of a prestigious track?
4. How does the COVID-19 crisis affect the choice for excellence? What are the challenges and opportunities?

Participants

1. Karin **ALDEA**, Owner, YouTube Channel 'Top Geek'
2. Sagy **BAR**, CEO, Cyber Education Center
3. Oran **HUBERMAN**, CEO, Kayma Labs
4. Karine **NAHON**, Researcher at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya and President of the Israel Internet Association
5. Omri **ZERACHOVITZ**, High-Tech Editor and Reporter, Globes

Background material for the discussion

In preparation for the discussion, it is recommended to read the ['2021 Update'](#) of the foundation and [background materials](#) prepared especially for this meeting.