

August 12, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of BBYO, the world's largest Jewish teen movement reaching over 75,000 teens across 60+ countries, to provide context for a unique opportunity that your student plans to be at that will require them to be absent from school Thursday, February 13 – Monday, February 17, 2025.

Each year, teen leaders, alumni, advisors, professional staff and philanthropists from around the world convene on President's Day weekend at **BBYO International Convention**, the largest annual gathering of Jewish teens worldwide. This event, taking place this year in Denver, Colorado, will provide an impactful stage for teens to champion democracy, engage in crucial dialogues on combating antisemitism and hate, and fuel their enthusiasm for making a difference in their communities and the world around them. We realize that for some delegates this means missing school, and we wish this could be avoided; however, with participants coming from across North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Israel and elsewhere, this date works best for our many constituencies.

The convention itself is truly an educational experience. Participants spend much of their time in learning sessions, putting into practice all the best components of the democratic process. They engage in discussion and debate, studying issues for the impact they will have on our total organization as well as for the specific members they represent, and resolving those issues by majority vote. In addition, there will be special sessions for attendees on how to impact our communities in the areas of social justice, political advocacy, and community service. Previous IC guests have included U.S. President Barack Obama, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, U.S. Ambassadors to the United Nations Susan Rice and Nikki Haley, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Jonathan Greenblatt, NAACP President Cornell Brooks, CEO of TOMS Blake Mycoskie, CEO of Neiman Marcus Karen Katz, YouTube creative Casey Neistat, activists Cameron Kasky and Brittany Packnett, actors Justin Baldoni, Tiffany Haddish, Rebel Wilson, and Joshua Malina, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, TV personality and columnist Meghan McCain, Olympians Gabby Douglas and Aly Raisman, and many others. Additionally, over 200 partner and community service agencies have facilitated workshops, service projects and skills trainings throughout IC in recent years.

I hope that you will excuse your student's absence from their classes from Thursday, February 13 through Monday, February 17, 2025, with the knowledge that they will have indeed participated in a meaningful educational activity. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

*Debbie Shemony*

[Debbie Shemony](#)

Senior Vice President, Communications  
BBYO