



# JEA RESOURCE GUIDE AND MANUAL

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JANICE COLMAR – EDITOR

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Resource Guide and Manual has been designed to provide members of the Jewish Education Assembly with a handbook of resources to aid them in their own personal growth and achievements in the field of Conservative Jewish Education. Therefore, there are sections on such diverse topics as contracts and resumes to professional development options. Each section contains an introduction written by a member of the JEA and examples where applicable.

This is a work in process, which will be updated on a yearly basis. If you have any additional materials, which you feel would benefit our membership, please contact me at 973-731-9361 and I will try to include it in later editions. Also planned is a bibliography of references.

I would like to thank the following people who have contributed to this manual: Dr. Mark Silk, our president; Ms. Jean Alford, my secretary; Susan Mitrani Knapp, executive director of the Jewish Educators Assembly; Dr. Robert Tornberg; Lisette Nayor; Rochelle Hutchings; Louis Nagel; Dr. David Ackerman; Dr. Robert Abramson; Dr. Michael Halzel; Dr. Saul Wachs; Dr. Paul A. Flexner; Rabbi David Blumenthal; and Dr. Hy Campeas.

We hope this will serve all members and it will grow as new information is provided.

Janice Colmar

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## **WHO ARE WE?**

The Jewish Education Assembly is the professional membership association representing a broad range of educators and educational administrations who identify with the Conservative Movement. Our organization is dedicated to the advancement of Jewish educators and the enhancement of Jewish education in North America.

Established in New York in 1951 by a small group of prominent educators and pedagogues, the JEA has developed into a dynamic and supportive network of over 450 members from all over North America and Israel. Our colleagues work together to initiate, promote, and maintain standards of excellence in the field of Jewish education. We create and support professional services, innovative programs, and state-of-the-art resources that enrich not only Jewish educators but also all those with whom they work.

The JEA is committed to the ideals and principles of the Conservative Movement and enjoys a warm and cooperative relationship with its partners – The Jewish Theological Seminary, The University of Judaism, The Rabbinical Assembly, The Cantors Assembly, The North American Association of Synagogue Executives, The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, The Women's League for Conservative Judaism, and The National Federation of Men's Clubs.

We count among our members some of the most respected and credentialed educators in North America, including heads of Jewish federation bureaus and agencies, professors of Jewish education, headmasters and principals of congregation schools and day schools, educational consultants, camp directors, Jewish family educators, early childhood directors and youth directors.

## THE HISTORY OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

The centennial of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America celebrated in 1986-87 has focused attention on the first hundred years of the history of Conservative Judaism on this continent. Actually the movement had its inception in Germany a half century earlier, in 1845 when a meeting of modern rabbis convened in Frankfurt. On the third day Rabbi Zechariah Frankel left the meeting in protest against a proposed resolution that declared that the Hebrew language was not “objectively necessary” for Jewish worship, but should be retained “In deference to the older generation”. When in 1857 the Jewish Theological Seminary, the first modern Institution for the training of rabbis, was founded in Breslau, Frankel was appointed its Rector. Within a few years the institution became the dominant Intellectual force in the religious life of central and western European Jewry and beyond. Basically, the movement which Frankel founded was a reaction against Reform on the one hand, and Orthodoxy on the other. The Breslau Seminary was the inspiration and model for similar institutions founded in Vienna, Budapest, London and Berlin, as well as overseas on the American continent.

The Breslau Seminary became the center of the most distinguished modern research scholarship in the fields of Jewish literature, history and institutions, in a word, the meticulous study of the past. But there was little concern for Jewish theology, law and the philosophy of Judaism in the present.

Frankel himself called his outlook “Positive-historical Judaism”. By this term he meant that Judaism is the result of a historical process and that its adherents are called upon to take a positive attitude toward the product of this development as we encounter it today. While his opponents, both to the left and the right, challenged him to explicate his philosophy of Judaism more concretely, Frankel was rarely drawn into polemics. Having evidently little taste for theology, he concentrated upon building up Jewish learning through the medium of his own research and that of his colleagues on the Breslau faculty and by training rabbis to serve Jewish communities in central Europe and beyond.

In the congregations served by these rabbis, minor innovations were introduced in the ritual. They were designed to accommodate Jewish tradition to the new conditions and insights of the modern age, while preserving intact the structure and content of traditional Jewish observance.

This pattern was largely repeated on American soil. The Jewish Theological Seminary, founded in 1886, had a difficult existence for a decade and a half. In 1902, Solomon Schechter was invited to these shores to serve as its president. He assembled a constellation of scholars of the greatest eminence. In addition to himself, it included Louis Ginzberg, Alexander Marx, Israel Friedlaender, Israel Davidson and Mordecai Kaplan, as well as a galaxy of other scholars, perhaps less well known, but highly gifted and creative. The Seminary faculty and many of its early alumni produced valuable works in the field of historical and literary scholarship.

A growing number of American Jews joined the ranks of Conservative Judaism, demonstrating that the movement met a felt need in the burgeoning American Jewish community. This numerical success strengthened the conviction among many leaders of the movement on such fundamentals as God and man, Israel and the world, ethics, and ritual.

The practical considerations that seemed to support the wisdom of avoiding or at least minimizing, the discussion of theological, philosophical and legal issues were reinforced by significant inner factors. The first lay in the character of Conservative Judaism. It had emerged as a reactive movement called into being to stem the tide of Reform, a task in which it has proved highly successful by demonstrating that the Jewish tradition is eminently compatible with loyalty to American life. The thousands of men and women who joined the ranks were generally emphatic in declaring what they were not. They were far less concerned with exploring the implications of what they were for.

The second motive was the desire to preserve, and if possible, enhance Jewish unity, and certainly not to increase division in Israel. In founding the United Synagogue, Schechter had hoped to

unite all congregations respectful of tradition in any degree, right, left and center, under one banner, as the name of the organization indicates. To be sure most Orthodox congregations soon began to look elsewhere for leadership, but the hope lingered among many leaders of Conservative Judaism that by avoiding clear-cut delineation of the principles of the movement, divisions could be avoided, at least within the ranks of Conservative Judaism.

Moreover Judaism has rarely sought to formulate a system of beliefs, even Maimonides had not succeeded in winning universal acceptance for his Thirteen Principles, the Ani Ma'amin. Judaism, perhaps unconsciously, had long acted on the principle: far better the blurring of differences than the burning of dissidents.

Finally, a third factor entered onto the picture – the sheer intellectual and spiritual difficulty involved in articulating a religious outlook for Conservative Judaism as a whole. Individual Jewish scholars and thinkers, both in the academic world and in the congregational rabbinate, had written works which contained valuable insights for such a project, but they were views of individuals, often influential, but not normative for the movement as a whole.

One can understand and appreciate these factors which militated against formulating statements of ideology until now. In our own time, however, the growing self-awareness of each school of thought in Judaism and latterly, the deeper concern with religious issues among the most genuinely dedicated members of the community, demand answers to questions it earlier seemed easier to avoid.

The formulation of basic doctrine is a particularly difficult task for Conservative Judaism, far more than for its sister movements. Reform Judaism has denied the authority of Jewish law, so that each rabbi and each congregant is free to choose whatever elements of the tradition seem appealing in the name of "Individual autonomy".

American Orthodoxy, divided into a dozen groups and factions, is theoretically united under the dogma that both the Written and the Oral Law were given by God to Moses on Sinai, and have remained unchanged and unchangeable through the ages. In fact, this promise of a safe harbor of absolute certainty in a world where everything may be questioned has been the source of the attraction that Orthodoxy has possessed for many of our contemporaries. This comes at a high price, however. The results of modern scholarship that reveal a long history of development in Judaism are ignored, and the challenges presented by modern life are disregarded when possible or minimized when it is not.

It is Conservative Judaism that most directly confronts the challenge to integrate tradition with modernity. By retaining most of the tradition while yet being hospitable to the valuable aspects of modernity, it articulates a vital, meaningful vision of Judaism for our day. Difficult as this task is, there is comfort in the observation of our Sages that *lefum tzaara agra*, according to the pain involved is the reward (Avot 5:24).

The twentieth century, the most eventful in Jewish history, had made this task especially important. The establishment of the State of Israel, the horror of the Holocaust and the extraordinary growth and creativity of the North American Jewish community all demand new synthesis and applications of the new and the old in both thought and action. Jews must also respond to several major developments affecting the human species as a whole, including especially the feminist movement, the staggering advances in technology and biomedical research, and the awesome threat of nuclear annihilation. As these pages will make clear, the Conservative community has its own distinctive view of many of these issues, one which is coherent and yet pluralistic, thoughtful and yet oriented to action, traditional and yet responsive to the present.

The Conservative philosophy has been expressed in the lives of Conservative Jews for decades. A number of Conservative rabbis and lay leaders have also articulated it, in whole or in part, in written or oral form. As the Conservative community matured, however, it increasingly felt the need

to have an official statement of its principles. A decisive step was taken in 1985. The official heads of two arms of the movement, Doctor Gerson D. Cohen, then Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Rabbi Alexander Shapiro, then President of the Rabbinical Assembly, agreed to set up a commission on the Ideology (now the Philosophy) of Conservative Judaism, consisting of seven members appointed from the faculty of the Seminary and seven members from the Rabbinical Assembly. The writer, who had been a member of the Seminary faculty for thirty-seven years and also the President of the Rabbinical Assembly, was to become Chairman of the Commission since he represented both agencies of the movement. Its membership was subsequently enlarged to include representatives of the United Synagogue of America, the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, the Cantors' Assembly and the Jewish Educators Assembly, and a rabbinic colleague from Israel so that the Commission could speak for all segments of the Conservative community.

**Robert Gordis**, Chairman  
Commission on the Philosophy  
Of Conservative Judaism

Taken from [Emet V'Emunah](#)

## AIMS OF THE CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE SCHOOL

What do we expect to achieve in the Conservative synagogue school?

We believe that a good synagogue school education should and can be a major influence in forming what a Jewish teenager knows (knowledge), knows how to do (skills), and wants to do (attitudes and proclivities). It requires a sufficient amount of time to form the foundation for future Jewish living, study and growth. The school program will best impact on these if it integrates elements of informal education and systematically engages in family education. This program needs to start early, continue through adolescence and into adulthood.

We want all students to continue their formal Jewish education through high school and to be members of USY. Adolescence is a period of growth in the capacity to conceptualize and for dealing personally with one's identity. It is therefore important that Jewish education continue during these years and be ongoing so that the teen can develop a more mature perception of and commitment to Judaism, the foundation for which has only been laid in the elementary grades.

### Acknowledgements

This Aims Statement is based on work begun by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education at its meeting of March 26, 1996 under the chairmanship of Dr. Jack Porter and the co-chairmanship of Rabbi Marim Charry. The Commission's make-up, with lay leaders, rabbis, Jewish educators, cantors, and Jewish Theological Seminary faculty members representing the United Synagogue, Rabbinical Assembly, Jewish Educators Assembly, Cantors' Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary, grounded the deliberation in input from a cross-section of the Conservative Movement. Parts of several subsequent Commission meetings were set aside for deliberation and discussion of several successive drafts of the statement. The development of the statement benefited greatly from this rich and positive ongoing deliberation. During the course of its development, the statement was presented to and discussed with groups of Conservative Jewish educators. Much was learned from those readings. Based on their questions and input, revisions were made. The Commission is particularly indebted to the Conservative educators who met to discuss the statement in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Los Angeles and at a JEA Convention for their input. The statement underwent a final review two years after the process was begun at the March 31, 1998 Commission meeting (Temma Kingsley, Chair) and was subsequently adopted, unanimously.

As part of the process of rethinking the United Synagogue's Standard for Synagogue Education the Statement was augmented by a special committee and was approved by the Commission at its November 20, 2000 meeting.

Dr. Robert Abramson, Director  
Department of Education

Note: Sections underlined are suggestions made to augment the adopted Aims Statement to reflect a program from K-12.

### THE STATEMENT

#### I. Between Persons -- A Life Guided by Jewish Values

Showing that their life is informed by *Jewish ethical values* in the way in which they *relate to others*. A life informed by Jewish ethical values includes:

1. An awareness that Jewish values are grounded in a sense of commandment, "the uncovering of an external source of truth emanating from God" and sanctified by the Jewish people's ongoing work at understanding what God wants of us.
2. Making decisions in their ethical life informed by such Jewish values as:

- Tzedakah* - giving to make the world a more just place
- Kibud av va'aim* - honoring parents
- Lashon ha'ra* - refraining from hurting others through speech
- G'milut hesed* - acts of loving kindness
- Emet* - truth telling
- Tikun olam* - mending the world
- K'lal Yisrael* - identifying with the Jewish people
- Ahavat habriyot* - a loving concern for others
- Bikur holim* - visiting the sick
- Limud Torah* - Jewish learning
- B'tzelem Elohim* - All humans are created in the Divine image

3. Having an active Hebrew vocabulary of some thirty-six Jewish value concepts (see #2 above for examples) which they will apply appropriately to situations. Such value concepts will inform their actions.
4. Understanding that to decide what is right takes thought and knowledge.
5. Understanding that doing what is right can take inner-courage.
6. Knowing that doing what is right, though sometimes difficult, can be a source of great satisfaction.
7. Desiring to do what is right and doing it.
8. The study of selections of *TaNakh* and rabbinic literature that embody value concepts and the Jewish people's dialogue through the generations to determine how they should be applied.
9. Participating in *tikun olam* and *g'milut hesed* for Jews and non-Jews.

## II. Between Jews and God

Understanding that Judaism requires sacred deeds, *mitzvot*, in relationships between persons (see above) and in relationship to God. Students should acquire an awareness that *mitzvot* are commandments and while in Conservative Judaism there are different ways to interpret this (understandings of revelation), Conservative Judaism holds that we have obligations as Jews. In the realm between a Jew and God, living as a Jew includes:

1. Knowing and experiencing the meaning of specific *mitzvot* and committing oneself to their practice. (Since growing Jewishly is a process, this includes having an attitude that the choice is not between all or nothing but growing and not growing Jewishly and may mean the partial doing of some *mitzvot*.)

Examples of growing Jewishly in the observance of *Shabbat* are lighting candles, saying *kiddush*, or refraining from prohibited work: in the observance of *kashrut* they are not eating Biblically prohibited foods, eating meat only in Kosher restaurants, eating only dairy and *parve* out, or keeping Kosher at home.

2. Knowing and experiencing specific *mitzvot* includes:
  - a. Knowing about the Jewish holidays and how to observe them.

- b. Knowing about *Shabbat* and how to observe it.
  - c. Knowing about *Kashrut* and how to observe it.
  - d. Knowing how Jews practice life cycle events.
3. Understanding the role of *Halakhah* in defining the contours of *mitzvot*.
  4. Knowing several examples of how the Conservative Movement interprets *Halakhah*.
  5. Being able to articulate some of the values imbedded in specific *mitzvot* and in the clusters of *mitzvot* that constitute such observances as *Shabbat*, holidays, and *kashrut*.
  6. Being able to articulate the importance of *mitzvot* in Judaism.
  7. Developing a personal relationship with God.
  8. Understanding the rationales that have been developed for various *mitzvot*.
  9. Knowing what Judaism shares with and how Judaism differs from other religions.

### III. Torah Study

Having a basic knowledge of Torah includes:

1. Knowing the major events in the Biblical narrative from Genesis at least through the entry into Israel.
2. Knowing some prophetic writings and sections from *k'tuvim* and having a general awareness of what is included in *TaNakh*.
3. Being able to read in English and interpret the meaning of Biblical selections, which they have learned, and some they have not previously learned.
4. Knowing these three/four central Biblical ideas and being able to articulate why they are important in Judaism:
  - Brit* (Covenant)
  - Tzedek* (Justice)
  - Am Kadosh* (A Holy People)
  - Revelation
5. Being able to offer several examples of how Biblical ideas, values, imperatives have been interpreted during the course of Jewish history and being aware of how the Conservative Movement continues this process.
6. Understanding that the broad meaning of Torah is the Jewish people's struggle from Biblical times to the present to understand what God wants of us.
7. Knowing the Biblical and Rabbinic grounding for Holy Days and Life Cycle.
8. Discovering that Torah can be a source of meaning in their personal lives.
9. Having an appreciation of the Bible as the central and sacred text of Judaism and its central importance to the Western world.

10. Knowing various ways that the Bible and subsequent Judaism understands God, humans and the world and locating oneself vis-à-vis these understandings.
11. Studying in English translation selections from Torah, *Neviim* and *Ketuvim*.
12. Knowing some contemporary attempts to understand and make Torah meaningful.

#### IV. Knowledge of Hebrew

Having a basic knowledge of Hebrew includes:

1. Being able to read major sections of the prayers of the *Shabbat*, weekday, and holidays with fluency.
2. Knowing the basic vocabulary of the prayer book and understanding the Hebrew of frequently used prayers.
3. Having an active facility with 36 Hebrew value concepts and knowing the meaning of an additional 36 Hebrew value concepts.
4. Knowing that the Torah is written in Hebrew and its meaning is best understood if you know the Hebrew.
5. Being aware that Hebrew is the language of Israel and the language of the Jewish people past and present.
6. As part of the process of becoming aware that Hebrew is a spoken language and as a means of attuning ear and eye to comprehension, students will be introduced in the early years (K-4) to:
  - simple Hebrew conversations and stories
  - participation in simple Hebrew dialogues

#### V. Knowing prayer and praying

Knowing prayer and praying includes:

1. Becoming aware in oneself of a sense of wonder, amazement, place in the world, and being in God's presence.
2. Having the knowledge and skills to participate in *Shabbat*, holiday, and weekday services.
3. Having a sufficient Hebrew vocabulary to understand, with the help of a translation, major sections of the liturgy.
4. Being able to interpret prayers, search for personal meaning through the prayers, and to relate personally to some prayers.
5. Being aware of changes the Conservative Movement has made in our liturgy and why.
6. Being able to participate in services in accordance with one's ability up to and including:
  - being able to lead *Shabbat* and weekday services

-the mastery of Torah and *Haftorah trope*.

7. Being able to express oneself through spontaneous prayer and through the *siddur*.
8. Exploring the role of regularly praying.

Examples of students exploring the role of regular prayer in their lives:

- a) Praying daily
- b) Attending synagogue on *Shabbat*
- c) Saying the *Shema* daily
- d) Saying *Hamotzi* at each meal
- e) Saying *Birkat HaMazon* at each meal

## VI. Knowledge About and Concern for Israel

Having knowledge about and concern for Israel includes:

1. A familiarity with the importance of Israel in the *TaNakh* (Bible) and *tefillah* (prayer).
2. Knowledge that Jews have lived in and identified with the land of Israel for four thousand years.
3. An awareness of the commitments expressed in establishing the State of Israel and sense of the drama of establishing the State.
  - This includes some key events in modern Israel's history before and since the establishment of the State
  - This includes some knowledge of present-day Israel
4. Having a continuing interest in Israel.
5. Being concerned for the State of Israel.
6. Understanding the importance of the State of Israel and being able to articulate reasons for concern and support.
7. Having an awareness that *aliyah* is an option in the lives of Jews in North American and elsewhere.
8. Showing a desire to visit Israel.
9. Having an understanding of the political system in Israel and being able to interpret news from Israel in the light of that knowledge.

## VII. An identity with and concern for *K'lal Yisrael* (the Jewish People)

Identifying with and being concerned for *K'lal Yisrael* (the Jewish People) includes:

1. Viewing one's past, present and future as part of the Jewish past, present and future. (This includes historical moments of cultural and social expression. It also includes the *Sho'ah* but should not be limited to it.)

2. Sensing a shared common history and spiritual legacy with other contemporary Jews.
3. Understanding that to be a Jew is to be part of the extended Jewish family. (In this, it differs from only being part of a religious fellowship.)
4. Appreciating that Jews throughout the world are responsible for one another and demonstrating through their actions a commitment to the imperative, "All Jews are responsible for each other."
5. Participating in acts of *tzedakah* concerned with the physical and spiritual survival of other Jews.
6. Participating in political action on behalf of the well-being of Jews.
7. Respecting other Jews who understand Judaism differently and having some basic ideas about the differences between Conservative Judaism and other Movements.
8. Understanding the importance of in-marriage in continuing and strengthening the Jewish people and its values.

#### VIII. Conservative Judaism

Having a basic understanding of what it is to be a Conservative Jew includes:

1. Knowing examples of how the Conservative Movement continues the process of interpreting Jewish ideas, values and *halakhot* (laws).
2. Knowing specific changes the Conservative Movement has made in liturgy and the reasons why.
3. Knowing about innovations made to enhance Jewish living by the students' own and other Conservative congregations.
4. Knowing Conservative Jewish:
  - Personalities
  - Institutions
  - Actions taken as a Movement
  - Ways undertaken to enhance the Jewish lives of its members and others
5. Knowing about the Masorti (Conservative) Movement in Israel.
6. Developing an ability to engage in thinking about the Conservative Movement's theology as reflected in *Emet Ve'emunah* (See Teenager's Guide).

Produced by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – The Commission on Jewish Education

(Comm/Blue Ribbon/Aims hs)

## A CONSERVATIVE CONTEXT FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

Paper presented at the Jewish Educators Assembly Annual Convention

January 14, 1998

David Ackerman

Learning has always been a central feature of Jewish life. It is simultaneously the means as well as the ends of the Jewish people. Historically, however, the forms of learning, the knowledge base to be transmitted, and the ultimate goals of Jewish education have changed over time and differed within the larger Jewish community.

Recently, there has been great concern expressed as to whether or not Jewish education is "doing its job." These concerns notwithstanding, it is clear that Jewish education is in robust health and that there are more Jewish educational programs of all kinds available than ever before. This variety of opportunity implies a wealth of choices, which brings with it the dilemma of determining what distinguishes one program from another. For those of us working within the context of the Conservative movement, one way that distinction can be framed is, "What makes a Conservative Jewish education Conservative?"

The ideas that I would like to share with you are a distillation of many conversations that have taken place during the past three years. In particular, I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues who participated in two Conservative Movement Think Tanks on Jewish Education, held at the University of Judaism under the auspices of the Conservative Movement Council and the Fingerhut School of Education. Benzy Kogen, a JEA member, played a significant role in those Think Tanks. In addition, members of the JEA added their thoughts at last year's convention, which helped shape these ideas further. In particular, I've spoken many times with Saul Wachs about the importance of this question. His contribution to the form of these ideas cannot be underestimated. Finally, while I would not expect these ideas to be met with universal agreement and support, I would say that if they stimulated some thoughtful discussion about what is happening in our schools, "dayenu."

It is fair to ask why the question needs to be asked at all. After all, we have a network of schools, camps, and youth groups across the country, all self-defined as Conservative. Is it not sufficient to say, by definition, they offer a Conservative education? I think not. That is akin to saying that intelligence is what intelligence tests measure without asking if what is being measured has any relationship to an understanding of intelligence as it is expressed in daily life.

I would like to propose three primary reasons why we need to ask the question. The first reason is that parents do pay some attention to religious ideology when choosing a school. In a survey of 200 families conducted in Los Angeles, religious ideology was the fourth most frequently mentioned reason for choosing their school. If that study is representative, then the clarification of what makes a Jewish education Conservative would help in marketing our schools. The second reason has to do with the larger question of Conservative Judaism. If Conservative Judaism is actually a movement (and there are legitimate reasons to question that) then it is time to ask what is the educational framework that links the different structures that make up the community of "schools" that educate our children. By schools, I mean any of our institutions that serve to educate--early childhood centers, day schools, synagogue schools, summer camps, and youth groups. We need to recognize that the lack of an identifiable and comprehensive context will only hamper our efforts to create a coherent Jewish world in which our children can grow up. The third reason for asking the question is far more mundane, but perhaps ultimately far more significant in terms of the potential impact of a Conservative education. The majority of teachers and educators working in our educational system are not themselves practicing Conservative Jews. We need to be far more explicit with them about what a Conservative education is, and what it requires of them as role models, if we are to have any hope of being successful.

A few points of clarification need to be made in order to consider this question. The first is on the nature of religion and religious education in general. The function of religion is to describe the world, as it ought to be. That is, religion provides us with an idea of what constitutes the "good life." Religious education, then, is education with a mission--to explain that idea of the good life to students, usually children, and get them to behave in accordance with the principles involved. Action should always be one of the goals of education. It follows then, that a discussion of Conservative Jewish education assumes that there is a Conservative view of the Jewish "Good life" that differs from the Orthodox,

Reform, and Reconstructionist views, and that the mission of Conservative education is to inculcate that view.

The second clarification to be made is with regard to the relationship between Jewish education and the world of secular education. While the earliest schools may have been religious and catechetical in nature, serving to perpetuate the priestly class (across all religions), they have certainly been overtaken by the secular educational world. Religious education in America today cannot be understood without placing it in the larger context of secular education. Religious education, and therefore Jewish education, is affected by the trends of general, public education. If that is correct, it is fair to ask which pedagogies have been borrowed from general education and merely applied to Conservative Jewish education, and which, if any, educational ideas are rooted in the Jewish tradition itself. This applies to concepts in learning as well as to structural issues of schooling and pedagogy.

Finally, there needs to be clarification with regard to the difference between learning and schooling. Apart from the world of psychology, these words have very distinct connotations in Jewish life. Learning is a life-long pursuit, while schooling is definitely a time-bound activity. Any discussion of the nature of any kind of Jewish education must take into account the differences between learning and schooling.

If there is a distinctly Conservative approach to Jewish education that manifests itself in both the content and structure of learning, I would expect that approach to be translatable to all settings in which Conservative Jewish education takes place: early childhood programs, day schools, afternoon schools, summer camps, and youth groups. Only if we are able to articulate such an approach will we be able to say that we know what it means to prepare and deliver a Conservative Jewish education.

It must be acknowledged that Conservative Judaism shares characteristics with both Orthodox as well as Reform practice. Therefore, an analysis of Conservative Jewish education will reveal many concepts and practices that are shared by one or other of the other denominations. In fact, one of the primary ideas that I hope to clarify is that there is no single defining characteristic, no single-issue "litmus test" that makes a Conservative education conservative. Rather, it is the interplay of a number of principles that must appear simultaneously that define the boundaries of Conservative Jewish education.

I would like to suggest seven fundamental principles:

1. *Mitzvah* (Commandedness). Conservative Judaism considers *Halakhah* binding, although its application of the *halakhic* process is different than that of Orthodox Judaism. A Conservative Jewish education, therefore, is rooted in *Halakhah*. There are two important implications of this principle. The first is that the ultimate goal of Conservative schools is to get families to behave Jewishly according to its understanding of the Halacha and not merely to acquaint them with quaint ritual customs. We should not be apologetic about presenting or promoting one clearly defined approach to the Jewish good life. The second implication is that the study of Torah is an obligation, not a choice. Therefore, programs concerned with the study of Torah need to be accessible to families in the community. Accessibility means that families of differing financial backgrounds should be able to provide their children with a Jewish education. It also means that children of differing intellectual and emotional abilities ought to be able to receive a Jewish education. The Conservative community must ask whether or not the support it provides for Jewish education truly supports the ideal of accessibility as the fulfillment of a mitzvah. We need to ask if we are providing Jewish schools for all kids, and not merely prep schools for college-bound Jewish kids.
2. Text centeredness. If Conservative Judaism is halakhically based, then a primary characteristic of a Conservative Jewish education will be text-centeredness. This raises a host of questions about the role of language in our schools, and about the role of students as *meforshim*. However, a Conservative Jewish education must place an emphasis on engagement with the traditional texts.
3. Constructivism. Piaget taught that the individual creates personal meaning through ongoing interaction with the environment. Ultimately, it is the personal meaning, and not the meaning that someone else presents, that is most significant for the individual. This personal meaning is created through a process of accommodation and assimilation with the world as it is encountered. It would be easy to think of the inquiry model as something we've borrowed from psychology, but I think we can look to our own tradition to find a Jewish twist on this notion: *Hiddur Mitzvah* (Adornment of the Mitzvah). This concept means that the performance of mitzvot is enhanced by doing them in as aesthetically pleasing a manner as possible. This usually refers to the material objects used in the

performance of mitzvot, such as beautiful candlesticks, challah covers, Torah mantles, etc. However, it can also refer to the aesthetics of cognitive struggle. For example, one can fulfill the mitzvah of learning by merely accepting information without challenge. However, learning is enhanced when students construct personal meaning through challenges to traditional understanding and patterns of behavior. Conservative Judaism is based on an aesthetic of honest and open intellectual struggle with the texts and traditions. We are not afraid to present "problems" in the text, or to address gaps in the *Halakhah* that don't address modern life. We are confident that Jewish tradition is robust enough to stand up to comparison with the secular world, and that responses to modernity can be found within the tradition. I believe we can also consider the understanding that is gained through challenging the tradition can also be considered a Torah crown.

4. Stewardship. The purpose of engaging and challenging the tradition is not merely for self-serving purposes. We are not free agents to do whatever we like with Jewish life. Rather, we are stewards of the tradition. Jewish life belongs to the Jewish people and is merely on loan to us, the present generation. Our job is to take care of it, to pass it on to the next generation in as good a shape, or better, as when we received it. To do so, we must remember that Jewish life is not a static exhibit to be placed in a museum, but rather a dynamic organism, that needs constant attention. Like a forest, Judaism needs to be nurtured by watering, planting, and pruning. Water too much, prune too much, and you kill the organism. Water too little, prune too little, and you kill the organism. How much to water, how much to prune? Those are the hard questions. But they recognize that over time, organisms change. That Jewish life looks different than it did in the past doesn't mean that we have failed as stewards. The question is does it continue to be viable and vibrant. A Conservative Jewish education recognizes that the tradition can be strengthened through change, and needs to educate through change, while also educating for continuity. We don't need to look to the Sierra Club for the concept of stewardship, though. The Talmud speaks of the *shoel*; a borrower who is obligated to safeguard what was borrowed. We are *shoalim*.

5. Egalitarianism. Judaism is based on the idea that the Jewish knowledge is obligatory upon all Jews--not just priests, professionals, or men. When God commands Moshe to gather the people so they may hear the Torah, Moshe is instructed to "*Hakhel*," gather all the people--not just the priests and scholars, but the young and old, the women and the men. The obligation to know, and the right to learn, is egalitarian and can be seen as an outgrowth of the concept of being created *b'tselem elohim*. All the traditions, learning, and mitzvot, should be equally accessible to both boys and girls. Conservative Judaism recognizes egalitarianism in education and practice as a legitimate expression of the concept of *b'tselem elohim*.

6. *Chevruta*. The oldest (and perhaps the only) true Jewish theory of learning is that of *chevruta*; in which students learn together as partners. Neither student moves on until both have mastered the material. Through question and debate, they help each other understand. Finding the right *chevruta*, though, is much more than just matching intellectual levels. It also requires a complementary relationship with regard to temperament, personality, and learning style, and learning how to get along with those who differ. *Chevruta* reminds us that learning is a social activity and that the source of learning is in the relationship that develops between students and teachers. Ultimately, *chevruta* stands as a micro-model for students of how the community should function. A Conservative Jewish education will provide a model for inter-personal relationship skills that is cooperative and not hierarchical. This is in keeping with an interactive model of learning, and the construction of personal meaning mentioned earlier.

7. Creating Community. Jewish schools ought to be Jewish learning communities. Sociologists define communities as groups that share proximity, goals, mutual interdependence, and history and images. They also rely upon the creation of meaningful roles for the different members, which permits them each to be a contributing member of the community. Communities do not belong to any single member, and schools (or camps, or youth groups), as learning communities are not the property of any single cohort of students, teachers, administrators, or lay boards. They belong to the community, and each group has responsibilities to fulfill, without which the school cannot function.

The overriding ethic that governs our relationships to one another in the educational setting should be that of *Hachnassat Orchim*, or hospitality. As hosts, we must make others feel at home and comfortable, respecting the diversity of backgrounds and approaches to Jewish life. As guests, we must respect the wishes, practices, and experience of our hosts. The mitzvah of *hachnassat orchim*

guides the way teachers make students feel safe, and how the administration should welcome parents as partners in the learning community. However, if schools are communal resources, they belong equally to students as well as to teachers, and parents also have an equal obligation to make the administration feel at home. A Conservative education is based on the concept of a dynamic community, in which everyone has a role to play.

These seven principles individually do not define a Conservative Jewish education. However, when they exist simultaneously -- a halakhically based program in which learning is equally available to boys and girls, a text-based program that permits students to challenge the *meforshim*, a program that uses a cooperative paradigm of instruction and permits authority to a wide group of community members--we can see a Conservative education in action.

The question that follows is how to translate them into action in the different educational structures in our community. The different types of programs--day school, afternoon school, summer camp, and youth groups--all have different strengths and weaknesses. They are designed to meet different goals. However, they will be most effective in meeting those goals if they all operate from the common educational premise of a Conservative Jewish education. For too many years now we have heard that the solution to the Jewish community's problems lies within one specific educational institution, the day school. That is a mistaken notion. The solution, if there is one, lies not in any single institution, but rather in the connections that can be made between institutions. A simple analogy may help clarify this point. Jewish life can be likened to a stool with three legs. The legs represent the three primary institutions of Jewish life: the home, the synagogue, and the school. Remove one leg, and the stool falls. The legs, on their own, can support Jewish life, but it will be at best a wobbly existence. However, when the legs are connected (by stretcher bars, if you know anything about stools), the stool stands firm and solid. A Conservative educational ideology that connects our diverse structures will give us a stool that will support the community for many generations to come.

## WHAT MAKES A CONSERVATIVE JEWISH EDUCATION DISTINCTIVE?

Paper presented at the Jewish Educators Assembly Annual Convention

January 14, 1998

Saul P. Wachs

### Outline

1. Pluralism
2. Nurturance of the whole pupil, spiritually, intellectually, physically, artistically
3. Authenticity- allowance of room for all to grow religiously
4. Inquiry and Commitment
5. In a day school, both sides of the curriculum seen as equally important
6. Hebrew as both the key to the tradition and a living language
7. *Halakhah* as absolutely necessary
8. *Halakhic* development in the context of societal development
9. A shared a commitment to Mitzvah together with different patterns of observance of specific Mitzvot
10. Centrality of *Mitzvot Bein Adam le-Havero*.  
(A strong belief that true religiosity abjures immoral, abusive, unethical behavior)
11. Affirmation of America (Canada) as a *Malkehut Hesed*. (taking the responsibilities of citizenship seriously)
12. Affirmation of a unique relationship with Israel as the Jewish homeland and the spiritual center of the Jewish people. Nurturance of a responsibility to support Israel while working for the spread of civil and religious rights for all its citizens. Confrontation with the issue of Aliyah and minimally, *Sherut la-Am* and study experiences in Israel.

### Introduction

Roland Gittelsohn, Rabbi of New England's largest synagogue for many years and a leader in the Reform movement once described the three major movements in Judaism as "crazy", "hazy" and "lazy". I think that with regard to the other movements, his formulation is more flip than precise but we Conservative Jews, must plead guilty to a degree of ideological haziness; a discomfort with defining ourselves. We seem to be more comfortable in stressing on what Simon Greenberg *Zikhrono li-Verakhah* called the "Tangibles of Jewish Life": Hebrew, *Eretz Yisra-el* and the Synagogue.

It is important to recall that American Conservative Judaism was a reaction to the excesses of the Reform movement of the 1880s and stressed exactly what Reform Judaism rejected: Zionism, Hebrew language, traditional liturgy, Kashrut, Shabbat observance. For example, the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Synagogue can be best understood as a polemic Midrash on the "Pittsburgh Platform" that defined Classical Reform Judaism in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries.

In their private lives the members of Conservative and Reform synagogues did not differ all that much, but when it came to the public celebration of Judaism: particularly Life-cycle events and worship, the differences were clear and palpable.

### A New Reality

Reform Judaism is changing rapidly. The decision of Hebrew Union College to require all Rabbinical, Cantorial and educational graduate students to spend a full year in Israel has had enormous influence upon the beliefs and behaviors of these leaders in training for Reform Judaism. No longer can we assume that we wear Kipot and they don't or that we pray in Hebrew and they don't. More and more, the outer, public, liturgical aspects of Judaism are celebrated in similar fashion by both versions of non-Orthodox Judaism. Reform Judaism has supported the establishment of day schools, and uses the language of Mitzvah in its official publications (e.g. Rabbi Simeon Maslin, *Gates of Mitzvah*,). At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Reform Judaism has also moved away from the tradition in its acceptance of a patrilineal definition of Jewishness and in its acceptance of mixed married couples into its synagogues and schools, albeit with the caveat that children of such marriages must be raised as Jews and act as Jews.

## Conservative and Reform Judaism: Similarities and Differences

We share much with Reform Judaism: We are pluralistic, egalitarian, concerned about the universal aspects of Judaism, social activists, open to innovation in the liturgy. We are equally committed to the critical study of classical texts. How do we differ? I would argue that one crucial difference is our attitude towards *Halakhah*. As interpreted by the leaders of Conservative Judaism, *Halakhah* is indispensable for authentic Jewish life of the individual and the community.

We accept the authority of *Mitzvah*, *Halakhah* and *Minhag*, which is grass-roots *Halakhah* both as a binder of the community and an important way of fulfilling God's mandate for us. The source of the authority of the *Halakhah* has been understood in more than one way:

For many, it is the voice of God, the will of God for us.

For many, it concretizes and embodies the values of our tradition.

For some, it is sanctified as the voice of the people, confirmed through the practice of generations.

For others, it represents our understanding that human beings must bend the individual will to a higher morality if we are not to live in a jungle. (See, on this, Rabbi Robert Gordis, Emet ve-Emunah)

This insistence on the primacy of *Halakhah* also serves to differentiate us from Reconstructionism, which started as a kind of "left wing" of the Movement but has since staked out an independent existence.

Reconstructionists deny the binding power of *Halakhah*; some see all of tradition as *Minhag* or folkways.

### ***Halakhah*: Binding and Dynamic**

A Jewish school that does not seek to develop a loyalty to *Halakhah*, to develop a sense of obligation to Shemirat Mitzvot does not meet a basic condition for authentic Conservative Jewish education.

But Jewish law is not static, not ossified; it must reflect the social, political, economic, and moral conditions and standards of a time and place. There was a time when polygamy was accepted; Rabbenu Gershom, Me-or ha-Golah ruled it invalid.

There was a time when women were not permitted to take an active role in the leadership of *Tefillah be-Tzibbur*. The leaders of our movement decided that women have a right to share in the responsibility of leading *Tefillah be-Tzibbur*. Thus, *Halakhah* is both binding and evolving.

How does Halakhic change take place?

I believe that it takes place in one of two ways. Sometimes, the leadership makes a change and the membership follows. Sometimes, the people move towards a change and at some point, the leadership declares the change to be valid.

"*Puk Hazi...* Go out into the street and see what the people do," declares the Talmud, in seeking the correct way of solving a dilemma about Jewish practice. There is some trust that serious Jews will do what is valid.

Thus, a Conservative school must teach enough knowledge of *Halakhah* to enable its students and graduates to understand the mechanics of Jewish law and some of its underlying philosophy. It must teach *Ta-amei ha-Mitzvot*-providing one or more rationales to intellectually support Jewish practice.

### ***Halakhah* and Morality**

Most important, Conservative Jewish education insists that the *Halakhah* cannot ever be a cloak or a refuge for scoundrels.

The *Halakhah* must always be in harmony with that which is ethical and moral.

For example, Conservative Jewish schools teach respect for the land in which we live and respect for its laws. Citizenship in this great country is a blessing unequaled at any previous time in *Galut*. Not for us, contempt for the laws of our society. Not for us, the sense that if one puts on *Tefillin*, one is exempt from paying one's taxes or taking care of the environment. There have been too many scandals among those who present themselves as being ultra pious.

We teach the difficult Mitzvot as well as the easy ones (It is easy to keep Kashrut; it is difficult to work for Tikkun Olam).

Conservative Jewish education, teaches *Kevod ha-Beriyot*. It rejects racist ideas as found in the Kabbalah and some Hassidic writings. It does not see the blood of Jews to be different from that of non-Jews nor does it mistrust Gentiles in a knee-jerk unreflective manner.

In particular, it stresses that *Ein Menuval Hassid!* A despicable person cannot be pious. *Lo Nitenu ha-Mitzvot Ela le-Tzaref ba-Hem Et ha-Beriyot*. The purpose of the Mitzvot is to refine and purify the nature of the human beings.

Whether we choose to use the word "dati" or Masorti, for us, to be religious always includes a major stress on Mitzvot Bein Adam ve-Havero, being ethical, non-abusive, attuned to the needs of others.

### **Critical Participation in the Larger Society**

Conservative Jewish education does not encourage isolation from non-Jewish society or world culture. It seeks links between general and Jewish culture and celebrates positive aspects of their integration. At the same time, it encourages a critical stance towards negative aspects of the larger society, seeking to arm the student with the will and the ability to look through Jewish eyes at the larger society and to work to bring it into greater coherence with its own best ideals.

### **Education and the Open Mind**

Conservative Jewish education is dedicated to the notion that it is a sin to lock up a student's mind. Tradition is studied honestly; feelings are expressed. There is an aura of authenticity about the act of study; the whole person is involved. We do not whitewash the foibles of our heroes. We do not blur the differences between Peshat and Derash.

We do not see the goal of learning as merely understanding and transmitting the ideas of the past; though that is very important as a partial goal. The Jewish heritage grows and is renewed as each generation adds its own insights and its own understandings of tradition. From David Ackerman, I have learned to refer to this process as "Hiddur Mitzvah Talmud Torah."

Conservative education respects individual learning styles and needs and aptitudes. There is flexibility in the way in which material is presented. Students are encouraged to be active. Recognition comes from a variety of achievements, intellectual, artistic, ritual, ethical.

Conservative education is authentic. Teachers and students are assumed to be in process. They are not expected to make final closure in matters of belief or to have no theological dilemmas. They tell the truth about their problems and win respect for this honesty.

### **Israel and Zionism**

Conservative Judaism is Zionistic. It stresses the centrality of Eretz Yisrael and promotes identification with Medinat Yisrael. The language and culture of Israel are part of the warp and woof of school life. At the same time, it does not slough off the special difficulties our fellow Masorti Jews are experiencing, along with Reform and Reconstructionist Jews in Israel. We are committed to holding Israel true to its

highest ideals and do not hesitate to point out instances where the gap between "ratzui" and "matzui" is unacceptable. With all of this, authentic Conservative education will attempt to instill within students, an intense desire to devote time and energy to the support of Israel including study and work experiences and the consideration of Aliyah as a serious life-choice.

### **Hebrew, the Language of the Jewish People**

For us, Hebrew is *Kodesh*. To the extent that time and resources allow, we seek to teach Hebrew, both as the key to an authentic understanding of our sacred texts and as a vehicle for oral expression. This is best achieved when time is available and curriculum is focused. While this is most easily done in a day school setting, I will argue below that it can be done in an afternoon religious school, provided that a true commitment is made to this goal.

### **Tefila and Spirituality**

Conservative schools stress *Tefila* and combine a respect for *Keva* and *Kavannah*. They teach traditional texts and Nosah-cantillation and prayer-chant, Jewish body-language and correct procedure in prayer; they also stress IYYUN *Tefila*; taking the texts of prayer seriously through literary and rhetorical analysis, response to the value system of the liturgy, grappling with the theological underpinnings of Jewish prayer.

Conservative Jewish education teaches how and why. It recognizes that competence breeds comfort but that one needs a rationale to intellectually support feelings of Jewishness.

### **Ahavat Yisra-el and Ahavat ha-Beriyot**

Conservative Jewish education teaches *Ahavat Yisra-el* and *Ahavat ha-Beriyot*. The universal and the particular are indispensable elements in the curriculum. General and Jewish studies are both valued. Links between them are sought. The goal is the nurturance of integrated human beings who are part of the larger society and both critique and enrich it with the insights and values of Judaism. *Inyanei de-Yoma*-the burning issues of the day are discussed in Conservative educational institutions. Conservative Jews participate freely and actively in society.

### **Working with our Families**

Conservative Jewish education is not conspiratorial. It works with the families and does not seek to undermine parental authority. It respects the sincerity of all Jews and works to enhance the quality of Jewish life, openly, sympathetically and creatively.

Conservative Jewish education teaches a mandate to live in the community and to work for the betterment of the community. At the same time, it affirms the authenticity of a particular view of Judaism. It rejects any notion that Conservative Jews are less religious or less authentic than other Jews.

### **From the Ideal to the Real**

During the past 17 years, I have been visiting Conservative day schools and for a longer period, I have been visiting or working in other Conservative educational institutions, schools, Ramah, youth activities. I have found very fine and dedicated models of Conservative Judaism in many places. Some of the finest human beings that I know are part of the Conservative community of this area. They are truly religious in the finest and healthiest sense of the word.

In the end, what makes an educational institution Conservative is the quality of the people who make up the community of that institution. When educators are models of Conservative Judaism, then the theory of Conservative Judaism becomes reality in the institution.

### **The Problems: Not less but Different**

Many of us are familiar with the phenomenon of Conservative Jews who generously support Orthodox institutions and support our own institutions on a limited basis. This continues, in some cases, even in the light of recent tensions between the movements. I would like to propose an explanation for this phenomenon. No mother ever said to her child, "Bubbeleh, some people brush their teeth and some people don't brush their teeth, you decide what's best for you!" The message that our parents give to their children with regard to dental care is strong and unambiguous and it seems to work pretty well. Our pupils have been given a message that many interpret to mean that being Jewish and observing Jewish law is not that all-important. We mediate that message in other ways as well.

If you will pardon a bit of grandparental pride, I'd like to share a story. Five years ago, my two eldest grandchildren, Avraham and Eliana (ages 6 and 4 1/2) were sitting at our Seder Leil Pesah. When we got to "Barekh" they asked if they could lead Birkat ha-Mazon. I explained that one who has reached Gil Mitzvot has preference in leading Birkat ha-Mazon and besides, we were going to do the complete "Bentschen". "No problem Saba," Eliana replied, "we can do that." "You can?" I asked. "Where did you learn that?" "In camp," Avraham replied. It seems that both had attended the J.C.C. summer camp in Albany for a month and, since they recited the complete Birkat ha-Mazon every day after lunch, they had mastered the text. I was overwhelmed by this story. How many of our pupils or the members of our congregation ever get to master the complete Birkat ha-Mazon? How many are familiar with Hazarat ha-Shatz today (many congregations routinely do a "Hoyche Kedushah" at every service). When one of our members goes to Israel, or attends a Simhah at an Orthodox congregation, he/she might well get the feeling that Orthodoxy is more authentic.

Another painful example of this lies in the tendency to minimize the days and hours of instruction in our afternoon religious schools. It is good to report that those schools in this community who have "held the line" are growing. not shrinking. Let me pose a problem for your consideration.

Day schools are attracting more and more of our people and that is a good thing. However, rising tuitions seem to shut out the middle class. For example, if a family earns 60 or 70 or even 80 thousand dollars a year and tuition is 8 or 9 or 10 thousand dollars a year per child, what is a family with three children to do? I suggest that there is a population of unknown proportions that either cannot afford or does not choose to utilize day schools, but wants intensive education for their children.

There are now at least two places in the United States where such education is available in Conservative congregations. Congregation Chizuk Amuno of Pikesville, Maryland offers an eight-hour a week program to teens as an option. Temple Israel of Sharon, Massachusetts offers a ten-hour a week program spread over four days each week in its elementary religious school (They have Alef, Bet and Gimel classes in this track). It is noteworthy that Chizuk Amuno also operates a Schechter school while Temple Israel is the largest feeder into the local (Stoughton) Schechter school. Both examples, therefore, support my contention that there is a population to support intensive supplementary education. I believe that an inter-congregational effort to establish magnet schools that stress Hebrew language or texts or the arts would attract a population that is presently forced to choose between day schools and increasingly watered-down programs of supplementary education. Once again, instead of offering less, why not experiment with something different?

### **The Medium is The Message**

Does our movement intend to teach that "less is better?" Is a Conservative Jew supposed to know less, believe less, and observe less than an Orthodox Jew? If that is the message then perhaps, that is one reason why some of our wealthier Ba-aleh Batim are giving their money to Orthodox institutions, in the belief that they have greater authenticity and represent a better bet for the future. My understanding is that we are different from the Orthodox but not less authentic. That belief must be operationalized.

### **Conservative Jews Create Conservative Education**

In preparing this paper, I had a discussion with Dr. Elliot Spiegel, a talented educator with much experience. He said that, in his opinion, a Conservative educational institution is one that is populated by Conservative Jews.

On one level, he is absolutely right. I would modify his formulation to say that a Conservative institution is one that is populated by actual or potential Conservative Jews.

How do we create and maintain such institutions? Let me confine my comments to our schools. To staff a Conservative school requires that we use criteria for staff selection, which heavily weigh commitment to the nurturance of Conservative Judaism. This is not "pie in the sky;" it can be done.

### **A Model of a Conservative Jewish Educational Institution**

Let me describe such an institution. I refer to the Solomon Schechter School in Stoughton, Massachusetts. This school was founded by alumni of Schechter and Camp Ramah. After a false start of one year, the founders decided that the mission of the school was to nurture serious Conservative Jews. They then prevailed upon Jane Cohen, a parent to assume the educational leadership of the school. Jane occupies the position of head of school to this day, and, besides being a fine educator, she is also a model Conservative Jew. In that school, parents, teachers, administration and Board, share common definitions of success. In that school, the general studies teacher is the Jewish studies teacher and where the teacher is not fluent in Hebrew, a specialist is brought in to enrich the Hebrew language program. I must tell you that I saw some of the best Tefilot that I have ever seen in one of our schools in Stoughton. The teachers were not acting as teachers; they were Davening with the kids. It was the Minyan was a celebration of a true community. Jane told me proudly that, of 140 pupils in the school at that time, about 100 could be found in the synagogue on Shabbat and that; typically, they saw their teachers there.

The school also benefited greatly, until recently, from the presence of Rabbi Pesach Sobel, Zikhrone li-Verakhah, whose innate spirituality had a profound impact on students and staff alike. He will be sorely missed. Now there is a trade-off involved in the kind of school that I have described. The Hebrew language achievements of the pupils will probably not equal those of pupils in schools in which most of the teachers speak Hebrew as their native language. There are limitations in terms of what can be accomplished through the formal curriculum. I have already indicated that I consider a stress on Hebrew language to be an integral element in Conservative Jewish education, but if the language teachers cannot function competently and comfortably as part of a "delivery system" of Conservative education, one must at least consider the possibility that "Yatza Sekharo be-Hefsedo." In my opinion, what might be lost in the Stoughton school, in terms of linguistic achievement is more than made up by a wholeness, an educational integrity which allows for the study of texts in depth with full involvement of mind and heart. The sense of mission, shared by parents, students, teachers, administration and lay leaders, makes the school very interesting, and, in my opinion, important as one model of good Conservative education.

A recent survey of the Reform movement by Dr. Samuel Joseph of Hebrew Union College revealed that 70% of the teachers in Reform religious schools are Reform Jews. Undoubtedly that also mandates certain instructional trade-offs, but at least the problem of mixed messages, avoidance of the study of ideas and the honest sharing of feelings is mitigated if not eliminated completely.

All of the research on effective schooling has shown that clarity of mission and the sharing of that mission by all involved actors are essential components in schools that work.

### **Educating Conservative Jewish Educators**

Now, how can we have such schools? I believe that the key lies in identifying teachers who either are Conservative Jews or are flexible and open enough to seriously investigate Conservative Judaism. To cite one example, Dr. Steven Brown, a distinguished colleague, during his long tenure as head of the Schechter schools in Philadelphia, regularly taught his teachers about the approaches and beliefs of Conservative Judaism. I know that many of them found these seminars stimulating and edifying. If

someone is really not interested in this kind of study, that person will add little besides technical competence to our work and will contribute little if anything to the creation of a Conservative educational institution.

When I visit a Conservative school, I sometimes ask the faculty and/or Board, "What makes this institution Conservative?" The answers have ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous. Vagueness might sound like a good marketing strategy, but it is not. To make our case with the public, we must project a clearer message and to do that requires a team that understands and believes in that message.

### **Staffing Crisis**

At a time when new non-Orthodox day schools are sprouting up around the country, we are very hard pressed to staff them. The problem will grow worse both for day schools and for supplementary schools in the near future. Why have so many of our best youth eschewed consideration of a career in Jewish education? I believe that one important explanation lies in the models of teaching they have experienced in our schools.

Research conducted at Gratz College and at the Akiba Hebrew Academy, has shown that the pupils whose primary memories of Jewish education were positive were those who reported having being excited and inspired by their teachers. Where intellectual and affective excitement was part of the climate of the classroom, students responded and were deeply touched in the process. In the case of the Gratz students, it contributed significantly to their decision to seek careers in Jewish education (Saul P. Wachs, "Becoming Jewish Educators: Default or Decision? In Freedom and Responsibility ed. by Marsha B. Edelman and Rela Geffen, Forthcoming).

Where teachers are seen as integrated people who live what they teach, they can be powerful models for the young. The success stories in Jewish education will support this conclusion.

### **Conclusion**

Sitting in this group are colleagues with whom I have studied and worked for a number of years. I respect and admire your sincerity and have some understanding of the complexity of your task.

Friends, allow me to say a word about my wife Barbara, in whose memory you have kindly dedicated this session. Barbara was a "Conservative Jew by Choice." Raised in a modern Orthodox home and given an excellent education as a child and teenager, she found herself asking questions and could find no adequate answers within her own community. Through the Seminary, L.T.F. and Ramah, she was able to create a synthesis of tradition and modernity that inspired a great many people. It was a privilege to be married to her and to share her vision of Jewish education. Barbara never doubted that she had found an authentic way of life. Like her, I am convinced that the Jewish people desperately needs a rational, humane form of traditional Judaism. America and the world need examples of committed Jews who can and want to apply the insights of Judaism to the problems of the larger society.

I am convinced that we are living at the cusp of the Golden Age of Jewish education on these shores. Never before has the leadership of the community been so convinced of the value of Jewish education. Never before have such significant funds have been made available for our work. Along with these resources come expectations of high quality and significant results.

Do not be afraid to experiment with new models of intensive Jewish education. There is greater readiness to respond to educational creativity than ever before in the history of our Movement. Your work is Melekheth ha-Kodesh. May God bless the work of your hands.

I should like to acknowledge a debt to Dr. David Ackerman whose creative thinking and deep commitment to the Conservative movement both inspired me and stimulated my own thinking.

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

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Contact: Rhonda Schild

The Canadian Council for Conservative Judaism is the umbrella organization for our 31 Canadian congregations from coast to coast. It serves as the national Canadian voice of Conservative Judaism.

### **CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR MASORTI JUDAISM**

1520 Steeles Ave, W., #112  
Concord Ontario L4k 3B9  
(905) 738-1717  
Long distance, toll-free: (800) 419-5666  
FAX: (905) 738-1331  
E-mail: [mercuz-masori@interactivepages.com](mailto:mercuz-masori@interactivepages.com)  
Contact: Marilyn Cohen, Executive Director

The Canadian Foundation for Masorti Judaism raises funds in support of Masorti-Conservative programs in Israel and around the world. Programmes supported include close to 50 Masorti congregations in Israel, the Center for Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem, the Schechter Institute of Judaic studies, TAL educational programs, Bar/bat Mitzvah for the Special Child, Noam Youth movement and much more.

### **CANTORS ASSEMBLY**

Jewish Theological Seminary  
3080 Broadway, Suite 613  
New York, NY 10027-4649  
(212) 678-8834  
FAX: (212) 662-8989  
E-mail [caoffice@jtsa.edu](mailto:caoffice@jtsa.edu)  
Contact: Hazzan Stephen Stein

The Cantors Assembly is concerned with the traditions of Jewish worship, to advance the influence and effectiveness of Conservative Judaism, to maintain the highest standards for hazzanim and for their sacred calling, and to promote the welfare of its members. The Cantors Assembly accomplishes its aims by a variety of means, including the publication of original as well as out-of-print classics synagogue music for hazzan, hazzan and choir publication of its Journal of Synagogue music: the financial and educational support of the Cantors Institute and its student body; the convening of conferences, seminars, conventions and concerts of synagogue music. It has an out-reach program in the form of its *Baal Tefillah* Institute, which aims to replenish the diminishing ranks of lay prayer-leaders. It has published a collection of four volumes of musical prayer books and tapes for the use of lay people to master the art of the baal *Tefillah*. A second form of out-reach is its program of providing hazzaniam, on a one-time basis to spend a week-end or several week-days in small congregations which have never had a hazzan to acquaint them with the services provided by a hazzan. This program is carried out in conjunction with the United Synagogue. The Cantors Assembly, together with The United Synagogue Department of Affiliates, constitutes the official agency for the placement of Hazzanim in congregation of the Conservative Movement

### **FEDERATION OF JEWISH MEN'S CLUBS**

475 Riverside, Drive, Suite 450  
New York, NY 10115-0022  
(212) 316-4271  
FAX: (212) 316-4271  
E-mail: [fjmc@jtsa.edu](mailto:fjmc@jtsa.edu)  
Contact: Rabbi Charles Simon

The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs aims to weld affiliated men's clubs into a strong well-knit body; to guide them toward their highest religious, cultural and social objectives; to promote among them a more thorough knowledge and appreciation of their Jewish heritage; to incorporate the teachings of Judaism as a vital force in their daily lives; to deepen their loyalty to the synagogue; to train them for active and responsible leadership in

the North American Jewish community; to insure a reservoir for future Jewish Leadership. Its quarterly publication is TORCHLIGHT. Current major initiatives include Counter Hebrew-Christianity, Hearing Men's Voices, a video devoted to teaching of tefillin, and spreading awareness of Yom HaShoah.

### **THE JEWISH MUSEUM**

1109 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10128  
(212) 423-3200  
FAX: (212) 423-3232

Contact: Ms. Anne Scher

The museum houses the most important and comprehensive collection of Jewish art in the world, presents exhibitions of this and other material, houses the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting and has an extensive education program. Loan exhibitions are available to places with adequate space, security, insurance, etc. A schedule of programs as well as membership information are available on request.

### **JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

3080 Broadway  
New York N.Y. 10027-4649  
(212) 864-0109  
E-mail: [kaklestzick@jtsa.edu](mailto:kaklestzick@jtsa.edu)

Website: [www.ktss.edu](http://www.ktss.edu)

FAX (212) 864-0709

Contact: Ms. Karen R. Klestzick

The academic center of the Conservative Movement, the JTS trains rabbis, cantors, educators, social workers and other leaders for Jewish community. JTS operates undergraduate and graduate programs in Judaica its New York campus and its affiliated institutions including the Schechter Institute For Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, Project Judaica in Moscow, the Teacher's College in Budapest and the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires. Community education programs include.

### **Radio and TV**

This department produces four network television specials annually. These programs, exploring Jewish heritage, rituals, and community, are available for purchase. To

receive a brochure of current titles and prices, call (212) 678-8020

### **Havruta**

The Havruta program offers adults who want to study primary texts a chance to learn Talmud, Bible or theology in pairs or small groups—a style reminiscent of the study halls of Eastern Europe. The informal sessions, added by specially trained rabbinical students, are followed by a lecture on the same text by JTS faculty.

### **The Louis Finklestein Institute for Religious And Social Studies**

The Louis Finklestein Institute for Religious and Social Studies, a pioneering interfaith forum, was founded in 1938. Today the institute is working toward the development of a center for biotechics that will encompass research, publications and public forums. For more information, call (212) 678-8020.

### **The Melton Research Center**

The Melton Center aids congregations and others in improving Jewish education through course for teachers and administrations, new teaching materials and curriculum aids. Through the Internet, its Interactive Distance Learning Project gives students from around the world the opportunity to study under guidance of JTS outstanding faculty.

### **JEWISH YOUTH DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION**

c/o Marilyn Riffkin, Administrator  
709 Cannon Road  
Silver Springs, MD 20904  
TEL/FAX: (301) 879-0932

JYDA, affiliated with the United Synagogue, was founded in 1971 and is dedicated to the development of professionals in the field of Jewish Youth work, and to raising the consciousness of the general Jewish community to importance of this profession. JYDA develops educational programs and materials which emphasize the importance of Judaic knowledge and train advisors and youth directors in group work skills. Each year the

JYDA offers a convention for its members and individuals in related fields.

### **JOINT RETIREMENT BOARD**

7 Penn Plaza, Suite 720  
New York, NY 10001  
Tel: (212) 947-2400  
FAX: (212) 947-1676  
E-mail: [jrb3000@worldnet.att.net](mailto:jrb3000@worldnet.att.net)  
Contact: Nina Rone, CPA

The Joint Retirement Board, established in 1945, provides an umbrella plan so that congregations and other organizations within the Conservative Movement may provide their lay and professional staff with a retirement saving program. The program is managed at low cost to the user, while offering a broad, high-quality investment menu. All investment choices are free of commissions and loads, and all personnel are salaried. Its director, Nina Rone, is a full-time professional who is a Registered Investment Adviser in addition to being a Certified Public Accountant. The Joint Board publishes a quarterly Newsletter as well as "just-in-time" literature focused on specific events. In addition, it issues a quarterly investment results update on the performances of its mutual funds, which is available to all accountholders. Its director visits regions across the country periodically to give workshops and meet with accountholders. The staff is available to meet with accountholders by appointment in the New York office as well. The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly and the Cantors Assembly appoint the thirteen volunteer Trustees to the Joint Retirement Board.

### **KIBBUTZ HANNATON**

D.N. Hamovil  
Illit, Israel, 17960  
(04) 986-4414  
FAX: (04) 986-4771  
E-mail: Marcia Ashkenazi, Business Manager and Debra Panjtz-Pesach, Secretary General

HANNATON was established in 1984 by a Garin (organizing pioneers) of 25 located on the site of Biblical Hannaton in the lower Galilee, ten kilometers north of Nazareth. The goal of this first Conservative/Masorti Kibbutz is to build a modern yet traditional community which

combines dynamic observance with social equality and pioneer living. The Kibbutz is sponsored by the Masorti/Conservative Movement of Israel. It also operates the Simon and Betty Greenberg Educational Center, complete with an Olympic size swimming pool, which serves Masorti institutions and visiting Conservative groups.

### **THE MASORTI FOUNDATION FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM IN ISRAEL**

6525 Belcrest Road, Suite 602  
Hyattsville, MD 20782  
(301) 779-6400 FAX : (301) 779-5008  
E-mail: [Masorti@masort.com](mailto:Masorti@masort.com)  
Web site: <http://uscj.org/masorti>  
Contact: Rabbi Gordon Tucker

The Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel is a fundraising and information organization generating support for the Masorti Movement in Israel. The Masorti Movement is the Israeli umbrella organization of nearly fifty congregations, Kibbutz Hannaton, Moshav Shorashim, Neve Hana, the Israeli Rabbinical Assembly, Machon Schechter, the NOAM Youth Movement and the Ramah/NOAM Summer Camp. The Masorti Movement is committed to furthering Conservative Jewish values and observance and religious pluralism and tolerance in Israel for all. The Masorti Movement actively advocates the proper regard of Conservative Judaism as part of Israel's religious community, and presses for full recognition of Conservative Judaism life, especially concerning life cycle and personal status matters. The Masorti Foundation is a source of information about the Masorti Movement and is the recognized channel for contributions from the United States to Israel's Conservative movement.

### **MERCAZ USA**

155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 533-7800, Ext. 2016  
FAX: (212) 513-2604  
E-mail: [mercaz@compuserve.com](mailto:mercaz@compuserve.com)  
<http://www.mercazusa.org>  
Contact: Rabbi Robert R. Golub

MERCAZ USA is the Zionist organization of the Conservative Movement. It represents the interest of Conservative/ Masorti Judaism in

Israel and affects the lives of Conservative Jews all over the world. Its goals include pressing for religious pluralism, working for an equitable distribution of funding from the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency for Conservative Zionist programs in Israel and America, promoting civil rights in Israel for all people, encouraging electoral reform in Israel, and opposing any change in "Who Is a Jew" and "Law of Return", MERCAZ is a member of the World Zionist Organization. Membership information and program suggestions are available on request.

### **MERCAZ-CANADA**

1520 Steeles Ave. W., #112  
Concord, Ontario L4K 3B9  
(905) 738-1717  
Long-distance, toll-free: (800) 419-5666  
FAX (905) 738-1331  
E-mail: [mercaz-masorti@interactivepages.com](mailto:mercaz-masorti@interactivepages.com)  
Contact: Marilyn Cohen, Executive Director

Mercaz-Canada serves as the Zionist conscience within the Conservative Movements in Canada and as an advocate for Canadian Conservative Judaism within the Canadian Zionist Federation, the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency in Israel, Mercaz-Canada promote religious pluralism in Israel, encourages visits to Israel for youth and adults and disseminates Zionist educational materials to its Canadian Conservative congregations.

### **NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SYNAGOGUE EXECUTIVES**

155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 533-7800, ext. 2609  
FAX (516) 732-9461  
E-mail: [hauser@unix.asb.com](mailto:hauser@unix.asb.com)  
Contact: Harry Hauser, Executive Director  
Amir Pilch, FA, President

NAASE is an international professional organization of Conservative Synagogue Executive Directors that currently serves close to 300 affiliated congregations. In conjunction with USCJ on a national as well as regional level, NAASE co-sponsors seminars for

leadership development, placement of synagogue Executive Directors and general congregational assistance. The PALS Program enables congregations to have on-site consultations. Its mentoring program help new synagogue administrators. NAASE offers professional growth for its members through education programs in conjunction with USCJ and the Jewish Theological Seminary, NAASE's own certification program, Fellow in Synagogue Administration (FSA), its Amin Tzibur Commission with JTS and USCJ and at Seminars and workshops provided at NAASE's annual conventions.

### **NAT. RAMAH COMM., INC. AND RAMAH CAMPS**

3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
(212) 678-8881  
FAX: (212) 749-8251  
E-mail: [ramah@jtsa.edu](mailto:ramah@jtsa.edu)  
Website: [www.campramah.org](http://www.campramah.org)  
Contact: Dr. Sheldon Corp, National Director

The summer camps and retreat centers of the Conservative Movement. With overnight camps in California, Canada, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Israel, Argentina and Russia. Day Camps in New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Israel. In addition to summer camps, Ramah sponsors family camping retreats, congregational and 8<sup>th</sup> grade school Israel trips, and academic semester programs in Israel for grades 10-12. Tikvah programs for special needs children at four locations.

### **THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY**

3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
(212) 280-6000  
FAX: (212) 749-9166  
E-mail: [rabassembly@jtsa.edu](mailto:rabassembly@jtsa.edu)  
Website: [www.rabbinicalassembly.org](http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org)  
Contact: Rabbi Joel Meyers, Executive Vice President

The Rabbinical Assembly, founded in 1901, is the international association of Conservative Rabbis. The assembly actively promotes the cause of Conservative Judaism and works unceasingly to benefit Klal Yisrael; publishes learned texts, prayer books and works of Jewish interest; and maintains the Committee

on Jewish Law and Standards for the Conservative Movement. It serves the professional and personal needs of its membership through publications, conferences and benefit programs, and administrators the Movement's Joint Placement Commission. Rabbis of the Assembly serve throughout the world, in congregations, on the campus, as educators, hospitals and military chaplains, teachers of Judaica, and officers of communal service organizations.

### **UNIVERSITY OF JUDAISM**

15600 Mulholland Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90077  
(310) 476-9777  
FAX : (310) 471-1278  
Website: <http://www.uj.edu>  
Contact: Communications Dept.

The University Of Judaism is a fully accredited academic institution dedicated to the study and advancement of Jewish life in an environment of free and open inquiry. The University includes the College of Arts and Sciences, a liberal arts school distinctive for its interdisciplinary approach to Jewish and Western studies, and graduate professional programs in education, nonprofit business administration and behavioral psychology. The University also houses two national think tanks: the Center for Policy Options and the Whizin Center for the Future of Jewish Life. As part of its commitment to fostering the moral, cultural and spiritual values of the Jewish heritage, the University also offers extensive adult education classes, community cultural events and outreach programs for Jewish communities throughout the West Coast. The 26-acre hilltop campus includes a modern student housing plaza and spacious academic and administrative buildings. The University is home to The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, the first ordaining institution on the West Coast, which is training Conservative Rabbis for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The University also houses the Ostrow library, which has one of the West's largest and most distinguished Judaica collections. The University was founded in 1947 by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and is now an independent institution of higher learning. The University publishes an annual magazine showcasing its faculty, programs and students.

### **WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**

48 East 74 Street  
New York, NY 10021  
(212) 628-1600  
FAX: (212) 772-3507  
E-mail: [wleague74@aol.com](mailto:wleague74@aol.com)  
Contact: Bernice Balter

Women's League, the largest synagogue women's group in the world, services 700 affiliated Sisterhoods, and is dedicated to the perpetuation of traditional Judaism in the home, synagogue and community. To promote these goals, it publishes OUTLOOK Magazine (quarterly publication), Ba'Olam (bi-monthly world affairs newsletter), a holiday celebration series, a Jewish baby book, a Jewish healing service, divray Torah, a manual for making a kosher kitchen, and other programmatic, administrative and educational materials. It supports the Jewish Theological Seminary and the University of Judaism through its Torah Fund Campaign. Women's League maintains nongovernmental observer status at the United Nations, and is an active member of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, World Jewish Congress, and the Leadership conference of National Jewish Women's Organizations, among others. Women' League also sponsors biennial international conventions and a capital conference in Washington, D.C.

### **WORLD COUNCIL OF SYNAGOGUES**

155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 533-7800 Ext. 2018  
FAX: (212) 353-9439  
E-mail: [worldcouncil@compuserce.com](mailto:worldcouncil@compuserce.com)  
Contact: Rabbi Benjamin Z. Kreitman

As the international arm of the Conservative Movements, the World Council of Masorti/Conservative Synagogues is comprised of member congregations and synagogue organizations in twenty-two countries around the world. Offices are in Jerusalem, New York and Buenos Aires. The Council publishes a periodic "update" and the Seminario Latin Americo, publishes the quarterly Mahshavot as a High Holy Day machzor and the Friday

evening service. Our French congregations are in the process of publishing liturgical and educational materials in French. In Hungary,

we sponsor a Teacher's Institute as part of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Budapest.

## **PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT FOR JEWISH EDUCATOR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS**

One of the most vital functions of the Jewish Educators Assembly is the professional placement of its constituent members. In full cooperation with The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and The Jewish Theological Seminary, the Joint Commission on Educator Placement has been established as the official and only educator placement agency for the Conservative Movement. Accordingly, the JCEP is charged with the task of educator placement in United Synagogue and Solomon Schechter schools.

The underlying principles guiding the Joint Commission rest on mutually accepted notions of absolute fairness and total equity to schools and educator applicants alike. Procedures and placement standards have been established over the years to insure maximum benefit to all involved in the search process. A JEA member who is contemplating a position change is welcome to contact the JEA office for further instructions on how to begin the placement process.

### **INTRODUCTION TO RESUME**

Ideally, the position, which you ultimately secure, will be a long-term relationship in which the interaction between you, the Professional, your Board of Education and the Rabbi will enhance your school and your personal growth.

In order to facilitate this match, the resume you submit should represent not only your educational background and experience, but also your professional goals.

Before you prepare to gather the information that you will present to a prospective employer, some time should be spent in introspection. First, clarify your personal ideals, needs, career goals, and the environment in which you feel most comfortable.

When you can prepare a clear statement of your goals, you are ready to begin assembling the pieces of your life that fortify your intentions to achieve those goals. These pieces will include education, experience, volunteer work and other experiences that have added to your skills and abilities (examples are music or camp counseling).

It has been noted that a resume is an expanded business card. Those items should be selected which would be desirable to your most ideal position. A brief description should substantiate this claim. The appearance should be professional looking.

The reader must be able to determine, at a glance, if your qualifications suit his/her needs, without having to read many pages. If you are not qualified for a position, you will not be successful.

A resume that has been crafted with careful thought and communicating your identify and goals will obtain an interview with an employer who is seeking someone like you and will serve as a means of facilitating conversation during the meeting.

## RESUME – SAMPLES

Name  
Any Street  
Any town, any state  
Home Phone

### EDUCATION

1973 – 1976 BA Psychology, Western Connecticut State University, Magna Cum Laude  
1980-1986 MS Counseling, Western Connecticut State University  
1990-1992 MS Early Childhood Education. Fellowship. Southern Connecticut State University

Various CAJE Conferences

1984-1986 Adult Education Humash and Rashi with Rabbi Jack Moline

1986,1987 Trips to Israel

October-May 1988-89 Prayer study with Dr. Miriam Shapiro at Westchester

Teacher's

Center

### Courses at Jewish Theological Seminary.

1988 Structure of the Sugyot-Audlt

1988 History 600BCE-600CE Wars. Parties and Politics 3Cr.

1992 Introduction to Talmud 3Cr.

1992 Intensive Element Hebrew 3Cr.

1998 Intensive Element Hebrew~~ 3Cr.

1999 God, Torah and Israel 3Cr.

2000 Introduction to Rabbinic Literature 3Cr.

### Licensures/Certifications

State of Connecticut: Initial Educator's Certificate N-3-6

Licensed Professional Counselor

National Board of Certified Counselors

### Professional Associations

Member of Jewish Educators Assembly

Board of Jewish Educator's Assembly

President Westchester Association of Hebrew Schools

Member of CAJE

Member of American and Connecticut Counseling Associations

### EMPLOYMENT

1997-Present

*Educational Director, Yorktown Jewish Center, Yorktown Heights, NY*

Responsibilities include Elementary and High School. 103 students. School was awarded the distinction of School of Excellence by USCJ in 1999. School meets 3 days per week. Supervise 10 adult teachers. Participation in ELI program. Teach High School aides. And supervise.

1998-Present

*Consultant, Hebrew Teacher, Maimonides Academy PTO, Danbury Ct.*

Hebrew teacher to the parents of children enrolled in the Day School

1996- Present

*Consultant, Service Coordinator, Community Living Corporation, Mt. Kisco, N.Y.*

Prescribe, attain and monitor services for Developmentally Disabled Adults in a residential setting. Interface with agency personnel and families of residents. 15 Clients.

1996-1997

*Teacher, Mercaz Community High School, Bridgeport Ct.*

Taught Drama utilizing Jewish literature and the application of Torah In the same manner as above

1996-1997

*Educational Director, Congregation Beth El, Fairfield, Ct.*

Approximately 100 students. Established computer lab with Judaic software introduced effective pilot Hebrew/Siddur learning program, converted to child-centered learning

### Positions in Volunteer Community

1994-1995 Co-President Danbury; Chapter of Hadassah Life Member

1992-1994 Chair, Education Jewish Federation

1991-1995 Education Committee, Maimonides Academy, Danbury Ct.

References available upon request

72 Apple Lane  
Briarcliff , New York 10510  
(914) 941-0026 Fax: (914) 941-1948

**STRENGTHS:**

- Attending to details
- Team building
- Coordinating programs and personnel
- Researching
- Independent decision-making
- Presentation skills
- Self-starter

**SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE:**

Responsible for setting educational direction, managing personnel and acting as a liaison between the school, parents, teachers, and directors of a religious school with students from grades kindergarten through eleventh grade. Oversee teachers and aides and implement policy for the school. Supervise, train and serve as resource person for teachers and members of the community. Allocate money for books, materials, special programs and monitor budget expenses. Attend all Board meetings to provide input on long-range planning. Write articles for the newsletters. Act in numerous leadership positions in several non-profit organizations. Organize and coordinate conferences in both the secular and Jewish educational areas. Make presentations at meetings and develop strategies for implementing programs on the county level.

**EDUCATION:**

M.A. - Early Education: Teacher's College Columbia University - 1962

B.A. – History: Brandeis University – 1960

Jewish Family Educator - B.J.E. of Greater New York and Fordham University - 1995

Numerous courses, workshops and seminars at SUNY Purchase, CAJE, B.J.E. Teacher's Center and Principal Centers at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania.

Participant in Teacher Training Program at the Jewish Museum

**LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES:**

Jewish Family Educator  
Principal's License: Board of Jewish Education  
New York State Teaching License K-6

**WORK HISTORY'**

1989- Present      **EDUCATION DIRECTOR**  
Yorktown Jewish Center, Yorktown Heights, New York

**1993-1995**      **PROGRAM/VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**  
Community Synagogue, Rye, New York

1989-1995

**RESOURCE ROOM TEACHER**

Westchester Jewish Center, Mamaroneck, New York

**VOLUNTEER  
LEADERSHIP:**

1969- Present

Anti-Defamation League, Westchester-Putnam-Rockland

**VICE-PRESIDENT**, Regional Board (1986-1996)

**CHAIRMAN**, Education Committee (1988-1996)

**CO-CHAIR**, Westchester-Putnam Council (1996-1971)

**ADDITIONAL  
INFORMATION:**

June 1993

Honoree, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam Anti Defamation League

December 1992

Honoree, Yorktown Jewish Center Dinner Dance

1992

Recipient of the Westchester Association of Hebrew Schools "Educator of Excellence" Award

**IUDAIC**

**EDUCATION:**

Shulamith School for Girls (Yeshiva) through eighth grade  
Jewish studies courses at Brandeis University - towards B.A

**REFERENCES:**

## THE INTERVIEW

Each interview is a unique event. No two are ever alike. Each institution has its image of what an educator should be, usually derived from past experiences.

The interview should be a dialogue between you and the committee. Don't let your eagerness to make a favorable impression lead you to respond affirmatively to every question asked or demand made. Don't be afraid to say what you really feel. The interview should reveal your personality and ideas, which you will bring to the community. The committee wants to know your convictions, views and style and will expect you to abide by whatever statements you may make.

### PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEW:

1. Find out as much as you can about the institution and community before you go there. Ask the Placement Director- by telephone or in person-what he knows of the situation. Write the Federation, the Jewish Community Center and the Chamber of Commerce for background data. Ask for appropriate background materials to be sent to you in advance, e.g. brochures, handbooks, Anglo-Jewish newspaper, curriculum outline, table of organization, school or community study and the budget. If the institution has an educator, communicate with him/her for an evaluation of the situation. If you receive a negative report from the educator, recognize that the problem may lie with the educator as well as with the institution. Wait until you have met with the committee and have seen the community before reaching your own conclusion. It is just as important to evaluate the information received and its source as it is to gather it.
2. Once you have been invited to the interview, you will need to carefully review the arrangements for your visit. This includes arranging to be met by an individual who can present you to other members of the committee. If an overnight stay is planned, find out where you will be staying and, if it is a hotel, what manner of payment will be expected. You should be prepared to use your credit card and then to submit the receipts for reimbursement. We have learned that when the details of a trip are handled ahead of time, those involved are free to concentrate on the business at hand.
3. Spouses are not usually invited to the first interview, and it is unwise for you to suggest that yours should be. Should the interview reach the point of your being offered the position, you can always indicate your reticence to decide without your spouse having had an opportunity to see the community. Should the committee request that your spouse accompany you, the decision can be yours and your spouse's. A spouse should not attend any formal interview. You are the one being interviewed.
4. If possible, before the interview, have your host describe the individuals who make up the committee with their names. The more names you can remember, the stronger the impression you make.

### MEETINGS THE COMMITTEE:

People like to be greeted as individual. When you are introduced, stand and shake hands. If the committee is already seated when you arrive, circle the room and say hello to each person individually.

### THE INTERVIEW:

In most cases the interview will begin with questions from the committee to you, at some point, the chairman may ask if you have questions. If that does not occur, when their questions have been answered, indicate that you have a few to ask them. Remember, you are interviewing the committee as much as they are interviewing you. By raising your own questions, you put yourself on an equal footing with them. If the following areas have not been addressed, you should be sure to raise them.

- Is there a job description detailing the responsibilities and the programs that you will be responsible for?
- Who will you be responsible to-the senior professional or a committee?
- What kind of school/agency does the committee want? What are the educational/organizational goals?
- What is the system of financing? What responsibility will you have in raising the funds necessary for the operations of the program? What are the funding sources-tuition, the federation, etc.?
- What is the make up of the Faculty/Staff? Which are the strongest and the weakest departments? What is the turn over rate? How would they describe the morale: good, bad or neutral?
- What are the strongest and weakest points of the administrative systems?
- What is the relationship between the board and/or committee and the professional? Is the board active and knowledgeable or does it depend heavily on the leadership of the director?
- What changes have there been in the student body that would affect the overall effectiveness of the school? Are there projected changes due to demographics?
- What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the institution? Are there any serious problems that require immediate attention?
- What are the three most important contributions that could be made in the first year?

It is important that the interview is as much your opportunity to learn about the job and the people that you will be working for and with as it is for them to learn about you. It begins the minute you arrive in the community and continues until your departure. Determining when to ask your questions and when to provide personal information is very important. You need to be sensitive to their interests and their timing. You certainly don't want to sabotage yourself by raising issues at the wrong time or in the wrong place. Remember, timing may make the difference in whether or not you are offered the position.

One of the most important aspects of the interview is your personal demeanor. Very few committees are interested in a quiet, laid back educator. Rather, they are looking for an individual who exhibits interest and enthusiasm in the position as well as the leadership characteristics that are necessary to fulfill the role properly and with dignity. Although you do not want to change your personality, it is certainly appropriate to highlight your strengths through your behavior. If you keep in mind that the product you are selling is yourself, you will have much greater success in making the sale. You will always have the opportunity to cancel if, in your best judgment, you decide that the position is not for you.

At the conclusion of the interview, it may be appropriate to meet with other key staff members. Since they will either be your co-workers or your staff, your assessment of them may play an important part in your decision. In some communities, you will have an opportunity to meet with the outgoing educator. Take advantage of this meeting to learn as much as you can about the organization and community from the person whose position you will be assuming. By asking the same questions if the professional that you asked the committee, you will gain a deep understanding of the situation.

The interview is your first and most important time to determine whether you really want this position. If you are still interested after the initial interview and they are interested in you, then you will have further opportunities to explore the issues in detail.

**IMPORTANT!** Be sure to secure the names and addresses of those who provide you with meals or overnight hospitality. A thank-you note written on your return home is expected and appreciated. You will also want find out where you should send your travel bills. (These should include your airfare, hotel and other expenses incurred directly by you-be sure to include receipts.)

Taken from: Guide to Finding a Position in Jewish Education by Paul Flexner

### **QUESTIONS TO SEARCH OUT PRIOR TO AN INTERVIEW**

Networking on the very local level is very important prior to an interview. Knowing someone on the “inside” will give you a better idea of the needs and wants of the congregation or day school.

#### Questions to be researched prior to an interview:

- 1- What is the current term of the Rabbi or the Hazan?
- 2- What is the turn over rate of the professional staff?
- 3- Why is the present Educational Director leaving?
- 4- What was he/she strengths and weaknesses?
- 5- How is the lay body to work with?
- 6- What is the long-term picture of the synagogue? Is it growing, shrinking,
- 7- What is the egalitarian nature of the synagogue? Is it something you are comfortable with?
- 8- What is the job description? Does it require you to work/travel on Shabbat and Hagim?

### **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT PRIOR TO AN INTERVIEW**

- 1- How do you get a teacher who has been in the school for a long time to follow your curriculum?
- 2- How do you handle discipline?
- 3- What does a good classroom look like?
- 4- What models of supervision/evaluation guide your administration?
- 5- What areas of knowledge are your curricular priorities?
- 6- What do you see as the role of the Rabbi or Hazan in the Religious School?
- 7- What is your vision of the school community within a year, within 5 years?
- 8- Share a problem you had with a student (a parent, a teacher) and how you resolved it?
- 9- Tell us about the teacher who had the greatest influence on who you are today?
- 10- How do you feel about implementing an egalitarian philosophy of *Halacha* in the curriculum?
- 11- Would you hire a gay staff member?
- 12- Would you hire a person whose spouse is not Jewish?
- 13- What is your relationship with “Hashem”?
- 14- In what areas do you need to grow (personally, Jewishly and professionally)?
- 15- How do you personally enhance your own professional growth?
- 16- Why are you leaving your present position?
- 17- What were the 2-3 areas of your greatest successes and why?
- 18- What are your strengths?
- 19- How would handle areas which you have little experience in (choosing secular textbooks, designing secular curriculum)?
- 20- What questions do you (the educator) have for us?

## CONTRACT – INTRODUCTION

The interview is complete. The job has been offered and you have negotiated an acceptable salary. Now the time has come to put it all down in writing. There are many members of the JEA who recommend that you use a lawyer to negotiate the terms of the contract. The school/synagogue will have a lay member who is a lawyer negotiate because he/she knows the nature of contracts, you should be on equal footing. What items should be included in your contract make up this section of our Resource Guide. A basic contract template is available from the JEA office. (How to include something about the job description being an addendum to the contract)

## CONTRACT INFORMATION

### **Section 1. Introductory Statement:**

A professional Jewish Educational Director is vital to the education of the community in the traditions of our people. The Educational Director represents this tradition through training, vision and personal role modeling.

The dignity of the professional is essential to the success of this endeavor. The Educational Director works in partnership with the Rabbi(s), other Jewish professionals, the governing body of the school/congregation and its membership. To this end it is imperative that Institutions and educational directors have clearly communicated guidelines for this relationship.

The term “Director” as used in this updated code shall refer to an educational director who has attained the status of Member in the Jewish Educators Assembly, and serves in a full time capacity of at least 30 hours a week for one designated Institution affiliated with The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

### **Section 2 Duties/Responsibilities of Jewish Educational Directors.**

The “Director” provides school vision, leadership and direction for the Institution’s educational programs. Responsibilities may include; but are not limited to the following.

- a. The creation of a positive school climate.
- b. The formulations of the curriculum and the course of study in consultation with (where applicable) the Rabbi(s) and the School Board/Education Committee.
- c. The engagement, supervision, and discharge of staff, in consultation with the appropriate committee(s).
- d. The administration and supervision of the school, including budget planning, record keeping, enrollment and classification of pupils.
- e. The selection of textbooks and the preparation of educational materials in cooperation with the teaching staff.
- f. The organization and supervision of all curricular and co-curricular school activities.
- g. The planning and conducting of staff meetings.
- h. The organization and guidance of parent’s groups and other groups that promote the welfare of the school/congregation.

### **Section 3. The Agreement Between Institution and “Director”:**

The relationship between the “Director” and the Institution is a professional one. Every effort shall be made to ensure a harmonious and lasting appointment. All relationships and agreements between the “Director” and the Institution should conform to the following guidelines:

- 1) Recommended Period of Engagement:
  - a) The initial engagement of the “Director” should be for a minimum period of two years, except for a “director” with no prior experience, who may be engaged for one year.
- 2) Renewal:
  - a) The first renewal should be for a minimum of (3) three years.
  - b) Each additional renewal should be for a minimum of (3) three years.

- c) In all events, by mutual agreement, no later than January 31 of the last year of each contract period, the Institution and the "Director" should agree in principle upon their future relationship. Their detailed negotiations should be concluded, in writing, no later than March 15.
  - d) In the case of a "Director" with no prior experience who has been engaged for one year, in the first renewal only the above date shall be March 1 and April 15 respectively.
- 3) Terms of agreement:  
Upon the appointment of the Educational Director, a contract, letter of agreement or similar document should be signed by the Educational Director and the authorized officer or officers of the Institution.
- a) A job description mutually agreed upon by the Institution and the Educational Director.
  - b) A compensation arrangement including the following:
    - i) Base compensation and amount or percent of annual increments.
    - ii) Health, major medical, disability and life insurance coverage should be provided by the Institution.
    - iii) Pension-"Director" should be enrolled in a suitable pension plan such as the Pension Plan of the Joint Retirement Board. The contribution of the institution may legally be up to 20%, but in any event should not fall below 7%.
    - iv) Sick Leave-Reasonable time should be allowed for sick leave, which should not be charged against the "Director" vacation time, except in case of prolonged illness (in excess of 30 consecutive days), which may be charged against vacation time. It is suggested that an accident and sickness disability insurance policy be considered by the parties.
    - v) Shiva Leave-According to tradition.
    - vi) Parental Leave-The Institution will minimally follow Federal guidelines for parental leave (maternity, paternity and adoption). A Director who becomes pregnant should give ample notice to the Institution.
    - vii) Annual vacation of at least one month after serving the Institution for eleven months.
    - viii) Conference allowance and time-should be granted to participate in professional growth programs. To encourage the "Director's" professional growth and development, the Institution should:
      - (a) Assist the "Director" with opportunities to enhance scholarly and professional competence, especially after the first contract renewal.
      - (b) Encourage and underwrite the "Director's" attendance at the annual JEA Conference, and where financially possible, other conferences, summer institutes and courses.
      - (c) Provide payment of professional dues to the JEA and other professional educational organizations.
      - (d) The Institution will provide secretarial assistance to the "Director" to assist in record keeping and other clerical work.
      - (e) Sabbatical Leave-Upon completion of minimum of six years of continuous service in the same institution, the Educational Director may be granted a Sabbatical Leave of absence for the purpose of further professional growth and personal renewal. Taking into account individual circumstances. The Rabbi, Institution and Educational Director should work out an arrangement for the length of leave, compensation, and agreed upon term of post-sabbatical institutional service.
- 4) Termination of Service  
A "Director" or Institution that desires not to renew the existing relationship shall give notice to the other party, in writing, not later than January 31 of the last year of the agreement.
- 5) Severance and Retirement Arrangements  
Provided that there has been no gross misconduct or willful neglect of duty, if the Institution chooses not to renew the agreement with the "Director" who has served in excess of six years, the "Director" shall receive severance pay. The amount of the severance pay shall be calculated at the rate of one month's compensation for each year of service to the Institution, not to exceed a period of twelve months at the highest rate of compensation, to be distributed in equal monthly installments commencing immediately at the conclusion of the last contract year.

#### **Section 4. Evaluation**

The "Director's" performance review should be based upon priorities, procedures and a schedule previously agreed upon by the Director and the Institution.

#### **Section 5. Arbitration**

In the event the "Director" and the Institution cannot come to an agreement regarding any of the aspects of this code, either party shall have the right to submit the dispute to The United Synagogue Committee on Congregational Standards for adjudication, or to any other impartial group upon which both parties shall agree. Both parties shall be bound by such adjudication, which would be enforceable in the appropriate court of law.

#### **Section 6. Appointment**

Institutions and "Directors" should be mindful that there are established placement procedures within the Conservative Movement that should be followed:

(A) Responsibilities of the Institution Seeking Directors

- (1) Institutions seeking school "Directors" shall apply to the Joint Placement Committee of The United States Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.
- (2) Institutions shall not seek applications to replace an incumbent "Director" unless a bona fide vacancy exists through the resignation or retirement of the Incumbent Director or through the termination of employment as provided in this code.
- (3) Institutions seeking "Directors" shall assume responsibility for:
  - (a) Paying travel and lodging expenses incurred by candidates in connection with scheduled interviews;
  - (b) Paying costs involved in the re-location of the successful candidate and family, as well as the cost of moving household effects to the new community; and
  - (c) Assisting new appointee in obtaining proper housing and alleviating any undue financial burden resulting from the immediate availability of such housing.

(B) Responsibilities of the Director Seeking Placement

- (1) The Director seeking a position shall file in writing an application for placement with the Joint placement Committee and abide by its rules and regulations.
- (2) Directors shall keep the Placement Committee informed of other referral services, which they use.
- (3) A Director who is privately invited by an Institution to be a candidate for a position must direct the institution to contact the Placement Committee in this regard.
- (4) It is unethical to enter into discussion relative to a position occupied by another colleague.

#### **Section 7. Continuing Contract**

A contract providing for continuing relationship without formal re-election by the Institution affords the Director dignity and security. A review may be requested by either party regarding salary and other benefits, which should be negotiated periodically.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Unless this code is incorporated in its entirety, by reference, in the agreement, then a specific paragraph referring to severance and arbitration should be included.

**CODE OF PERSONNEL PRACTICES FOR EDUCATORS** approved by the Board of Directors of The United Synagogue of America at its meeting January 6, 1964. Amended 1995/96 by a joint committee of the Jewish Educators Assembly and The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Approved by The United Synagogue of Conservative on Jewish Education and its Committee on Congregational Standards. Approved by the Board of the Jewish Educators Assembly, 1996.

Reprinted from Guide to Congregational Practices

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN A "MODEL CONTRACT"

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the Board of \_\_\_\_\_ I would like to convey our pleasure at your acceptance of our offer (to continue) to serve as Educational Director (Principal) of \_\_\_\_\_ (The congregation has asked me to authorize the necessary expenditures in the budget.)

This letter confirms the offer accepted by you and sets forth the terms and conditions of your employment which are as follows:

1. This agreement will be in effect from August 1, \_\_, until July 31, \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Your base salary will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year for the period from August 1, \_\_\_\_\_ to July 31 \_\_\_\_\_ (yearly increments thereafter may be specified here).
3. In addition your base salary, \_\_\_\_\_ will pay a housing allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per annum and a travel allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per annum.
4. In addition to your base salary, the "School" will make annual contributions on your behalf to a qualified pension plan or other mutually acceptable retirement program of 15% of your salary which for Fiscal Year \_\_\_\_\_ equals \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The "School" will pay the cost of Life, Health and Disability Insurance.
6. You shall be entitled to \_\_\_\_\_ per year to be taken at our mutual convenience. Scheduling of vacation shall be subject to agreement between you and us.
7. The "School" shall pay your personal expenses for registration, travel, room and board at such professional conferences as may be mutually agreed upon and included in the budget.
8. Upon receipt of appropriate documentation, the "school" will reimburse your reasonable moving expenses up to a maximum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
9. As Education Director, you and your family shall be accorded the privileges of membership in the synagogue and we welcome you and your family to join in holiday, Shabbat and daily services and all activities at the synagogue.
10. As Educational Director, your own children may attend any school sponsored by the institution tuition free.
11. Your duties as Educational Director are set forth on the attached list "Responsibilities and Duties of Educational Director" which will be treated as part of this agreement.

If this letter conforms to your understanding of our agreement, Please sign and date the enclosed copy return it me at the school office. Again we are very pleased that you have decided to remain with (join) our school and our community and look forward to a long and successful relationship.

Very truly yours,

Chair

AGREED TO:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Educational Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE DAY SCHOOL CONTRACT

AGREEMENT by and between SCHOOL and HEAD OF SCHOOL

Terms and Duties. Effective July 1, \_\_\_\_\_ a five (5) year term expiring June 30, \_\_\_\_\_ ("the Agreement term"), you are engaged as the Head of School of Hillel

Subject to the direction of the Board of Directors of \_\_\_\_\_ and bearing in mind the mission statement of \_\_\_\_\_ as it may be amended from time to time, you shall have and be the operational authority of \_\_\_\_\_ and shall have the responsibilities, the duties and the privileges customarily enjoyed and undertaken, including the supervision of the students and the staff, by a principal or headmaster in an educational institution similar to that of \_\_\_\_\_. The oversight of the physical plant as well as the educational environment of \_\_\_\_\_ shall also be your responsibility to the same extent as generally undertaken by principals or headmasters of similar educational institutions. The students, staff, physical plant and educational environment shall be referred to as the "School".

This is to be considered full-time employment, with you undertaking no other regular outside employment. In addition to your supervision of the School, you shall be expected to attend school programs, events and community functions where it is important to represent \_\_\_\_\_. Furthermore, you are required to actively participate in fundraising endeavors to assure the School's fiscal viability and continued operation. You are required to actively encourage the expansion of the School's student body, to stimulate its continued growth and promote its educational philosophy and to follow its mission statement as the same may be revised from time to time.

2. Compensation. In consideration of your services, you will be paid, in the usual manner and at the usual times that a salary is paid by \_\_\_\_, a package of salary and other benefits described as follows. For school years one through five (that is, years \_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_), the annual base salary shall be \_\_\_\_\_ respectively.

3(a). General Benefits. As a professional development benefit, the Head of School may request up to FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000) DOLLARS during any single year, up to a cumulative maximum of \$20,000 during the term of the Agreement, said monies to be used for professional development which shall include a doctoral program or visits to Israel or such other programs the President of \_\_\_\_\_ may deem reasonable for the enhancement of the Head of School's ability to perform his duties hereunder. Any such requests for benefits, together with the request for time off to pursue said professional development during an upcoming July-June year, must be submitted to the President prior to May 1 and shall be approved or denied by June 1, or otherwise deemed approved.

(b) You will be the recipient of standard school budgetary line items which include reimbursement for attendance at conferences and a stipend usable at your election for the purchase of limited life/disability insurance coverage. You will also receive the use of a laptop computer for home and travel purposes. You will be permitted to use the \_\_\_\_\_ automobile every day except on Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. On Shabbat and the Jewish holidays, the automobile may be used for transportation to religious or school-related observations.

(c) Loan Provisions. The \_\_\_\_\_ loan which was secured to help you relocate, initially interest-free, was to have interest and principal payments commence on April 1, \_\_\_\_ and continue for 180 months through a due date of March 1, 20\_\_\_. As an inducement to you to continue your employ, the principal amount of the original loan balance shall be reduced by \_\_\_\_\_ for each completed year of employment commencing with year one of this Agreement. Interest shall also be forgiven in each year the loan balance is so reduced. The term of the loan shall hereby be extended for an additional five (5) years and three (3) months until a revised due date of June 1, 20\_\_\_, and the period of time when monthly payments are required to be made shall be postponed by five (5) years and three (3) months, such that 180 monthly payments shall now be due beginning July 1, 200\_ and ending June 1, 20\_\_\_. In the event of your death or permanent total disability while employed by \_\_\_\_, the entire loan balance shall be forgiven. In other respects the terms of the loan shall remain as established by the loan documents, including provisions for specification of an applicable interest rate on an annual Change Date. In addition to the provisions for the loans to be repaid within six (6) months of the date of your termination from employment for any reason, the loan shall also be repayable immediately (and prior to such six (6) month period) if you sell your home after any such termination of your employment, with the repayment occurring no later than the closing of such sale.

4. Vacation. You shall be entitled to one (1) month's vacation when school is not in session. The exact dates shall be approved in advance by the President of \_\_\_\_\_. During your vacation and when school is not in session, you are not required to be present in the school building. In no event is approved absence for Professional Development considered a vacation.

5. Disability and Illness. Should you become disabled or seriously ill, your compensation will continue for up to ninety (90) days during the term of the Agreement, and you shall be entitled to sick and disability leave for up to said ninety (90) days. This is in addition to the regular sick day benefits enjoyed by the staff of \_\_\_\_\_. (If you are disabled and seek salary continuation beyond the regular sick day benefits enjoyed by the staff and beyond the additional thirteen weeks of paid disability leave allotted to you under this Section, you may request paid disability leave for the additional episodes of disability during the term of this Agreement, and such paid leave may be granted by the Board of Directors, in its sole discretion.)

6(a). Termination. This Agreement and your employment hereunder shall terminate

- (i) upon the expiration of the term hereof, unless sooner terminated as hereinafter provided; or
- (ii) upon your **death**; or (iii) upon your disability, which term shall mean your inability to render substantially all of the services required of you hereunder for a cumulative period of six (6) months during any consecutive twelve-month (12) period, if that disability renders you unable to perform the essential functions of your job with or without a reasonable accommodation; or (iv) at any time after a hearing of the Board of Directors of \_\_\_\_\_ for "cause". "Cause" shall mean repeated or material breaches of this Agreement, repeated or material failure or refusal by you to carry out the directives or written policies of \_\_\_\_\_ or its President, which policies are not inconsistent with this Agreement, or a violation of criminal law or an act of gross or malicious misconduct which could reflect negatively upon the reputation of the School.

(b). If you complete your five years of service under this Agreement and are not offered continuing employment by the School at the expiration of the five year term as a matter of the Board's discretion, then, in conjunction with your execution of a release of claims, you will be entitled to a one-time lump sum severance benefit in the form of a reduction in the amount of your loan obligation referenced in Section 3(c) above.

7. Waiver Modifications or Cancellation. Any waiver, alteration or modification of any of the provisions of this Agreement, or its cancellation or replacement, shall not be valid unless in writing and signed by the parties.

8. Construction. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the \_\_\_\_\_.

9. Assignment. This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of all and bind the parties and their respective legal representatives, successors and assigns, included but not limited to parties assigned rights under the loan and the note referred to in Section 3(c) above.

10. Entire Agreement. This Agreement supersedes all agreements previously made between the parties relating to its subject matter.

11. Notices and Communications. Any notice, payment, request, instruction, or other document to be delivered under this Agreement shall be deemed sufficiently given if in writing and delivered personally or mailed by certified mail, postage prepaid:

(a) to the Head of School, at:

\_\_\_\_\_

## **PRINCIPAL EVALUATION PROCESS – A MODEL**

The Principal will be formally evaluated each year in May. Informal evaluation and feedback is ongoing throughout the year during meetings with the President and/or School Committee Chair.

Each year, in May, the President will appoint an Evaluation Committee of 4-7 “stakeholders”. The members of this committee will be mutually agreed upon by the President and the Principal. The committee will meet in June with the Principal to jointly establish objectives upon which the Principal and the school will be evaluated the following year. It is understood that during the ongoing meetings throughout the year between Principal and the President and/or Chair of School Committee, these objectives may be mutually adjusted to reflect any changing realities.

Each April, beginning in \_\_\_\_ the Principal will write a self-evaluation based on the previously agreed upon objectives.

The Evaluation Committee will have an opportunity to give its own assessment based on the objectives. The committee will interview mutually agreed upon members of the school family (not more than 10), which may include faculty, parents, students and lay leaders. The purpose of these interviews will be to assess how members of the school family feel about progress in the stated goals.

The committee will reconvene to discuss the findings, and the committee chair will write a commentary on the Principals self-evaluation, incorporating the findings of the committee.

This document will be discussed with the Principal before the final draft is complete. The Principal will have the opportunity to discuss his reactions to the evaluation and add written comments.

The final draft of the evaluation will be signed by the Principal and the President, and a verbal summary of the findings will be reported to the Executive Committee.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PRINCIPAL – A MODEL

1. Educational leadership
  - a. has a clear educational philosophy
  - b. has short and long range goals
  - c. is effective in implementing goals
  - d. pursues professional growth
  - e. initiates and supports a caring climate for learning
2. Communication skills
  - a. has clear written and oral communication skills
  - b. organizes and encourages effective communication systems between home/school! staff
  - c. speaks effectively to groups
  - d. establishes positive communication opportunities
3. Relationship to others
  - a. staff
  - b. parents
  - c. students
  - b. Board
4. Personnel
  - a. recruits, selects and trains staff in accordance with the mission statement
  - b. provides support for staff growth, improvement and enrichment c. fosters team building and trust among staff
5. Fiscal Management and Administration
  - a. monitors budgeting and financial data to identify strengths and weaknesses
  - b. oversees fundraising and endowment
  - c. ensures efficient day to day fiscal operation
  - d. provides direction for short and long range goals
  - e. ensures efficient overall day to day operation of school
6. Presence in community
  - a. presents a positive image of the school
  - b. provides religious and spiritual leadership
  - c. works with other professional leaders in the community

thanks to Robert Tornberg

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Talmud Torah - the study of Torah - is a mitzvah that we stress to our students. Our continued growth through professional development is crucial to us as Jews and as professional educators. Many of us get together to study at the JEA conferences and in our regional groups. In addition, today, we can also benefit from on line courses. Below is a list of learning opportunities to check out.

Jewish Theological Seminary of America	<a href="http://learn.jtsa.edu">http://learn.jtsa.edu</a> <a href="http://courses.jtsa.edu">http://courses.jtsa.edu</a>
J.E.S.N.A., New York	212-529-2000
University of Judaism, Los Angeles	310-476-9777
Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, Maryland	301-405-4975
Spertus College, Chicago	312-992-9012
Gratz College, Philadelphia	215-635-7300
Institute for Contemporary Midrash, Philadelphia	215-247-8655
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA	781-736-2000
Hebrew Union College	<a href="http://www.huc.edu">www.huc.edu</a>
Hebrew College	<a href="http://www.jtsa.edu">www.jtsa.edu</a>
Yeshiva University	<a href="http://www.touro.edu">www.touro.edu</a>
University of Maryland	<a href="http://www.uga.umd.edu">www.uga.umd.edu</a>



ועד תעודות הארצי  
למורים ולמנהלים עבריים  
NATIONAL BOARD OF LICENSE  
For Teachers and Principals of  
Jewish Schools in North America

## **NATIONAL BOARD OF LICENSE For Teachers and Principals of Jewish Schools in North America**

The National Board of License for Teachers and Principals in Jewish Schools in North America serves the Jewish community, including day schools, congregational/community schools, early childhood programs and family education through the establishment of standards and criteria for the certification of professional educators. By establishing local affiliates and through cooperative arrangements with professional educator organizations, the certification process is designed to provide recognition to qualified educators as well as to encourage those who are entering the field to pursue professional training.

The National Board of License places a high value on continuing education for all professionals, both veterans with many years of experience and those who are entering the field either with or without formal training. By recognizing that individuals are drawn to the field through a variety of venues, the NBL has created a system of certification built on the existing opportunities available to individuals in communities throughout the continent.

The National Board of License encourages the educator to pursue certification through the local board of license or, in the absence of such a board, through the National Board of License. Specific requirements are provided for certification as a teacher, principal, early childhood educator, Jewish family educator and Talmud instructor in Jewish congregational / community schools and day schools. However, only the National Board of License is authorized to issue certificates to principals, Jewish family educators and Talmud instructors.

Educators interested in applying for a license should contact the central agency for Jewish education in their local community, or the National Board of License in New York for further information and an application.

**The National Board of License  
15 East 26th Street  
New York, NY 10010-1579  
212-532-4949 Ext. 452**

## VAAD HAKAVOD

The JEA has a standing "Vaad HaKavod" committee to deal with a wide variety of ethical issues, which may arise among our members. The Vaad HaKavod sees its role in the following areas:

1. Providing consultation and advice to members regarding specific cases or ethical issues.
2. Educating colleagues about ethical issues through a new "Code of Ethics" which is in a draft stage.
3. Formulating and suggesting policies regarding matters of ethics, for action by the JEA Board.
4. Reviewing ethical infractions by our membership or by the JEA, which are brought to the Vaad's attention according to specific Guidelines.
5. Appropriately publicizing our roles to the membership of JEA.

If you are facing some seemingly insoluble dilemma and would like a confidential sounding board, the Vaad HaKavod, which consists only of three JEA members, welcomes you to contact the Vaad via the JEA office.

JEA members ought to be aware that if they find themselves in a contract dispute with their school or synagogue, the United Synagogue's Committee on Congregational Standards is the official mediation vehicle with legal arbitration powers. This role is listed in the Model Contract for Educators, Section 5, which is printed in the beginning of the United Synagogue Directory (p.79). Hopefully, before a dispute reaches the level of official arbitration, the Vaad HaKavod may be helpful in informal mediation between the parties.

Rabbi Alvin Kaunfer

## **THE JOINT RETIREMENT BOARD FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**

The Joint Retirement Board manages a portable, self-directed pension program for professional and other employees of the entire Conservative Movement, providing a central headquarters to service its personnel the world over.

This 403(b) retirement program affords non-profit religious, educational and charitable organizations the opportunity to make pension contributions on a tax-sheltered basis for their employees. In addition, it is a "church" plan, providing specific advantages to "church" employees that are not otherwise available.

In addition to group term life insurance, each eligible account holder is protected in the event of disability by a special waiver of premium on the pension contribution, as well as on the life insurance.

Members in good standing of the Jewish Educators Assembly who are employed by any 501 @ (3) employer or public school or university are eligible to participate in the program.

Eligible persons who join within two years of becoming eligible may do so without submitting evidence of insurability. After that time applicants must submit the results of a medical examination taken at their own expense.

Eligible individuals apply for enrollment at any time. Initial contributions are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. At the time of enrollment, the individual will need to have determined: a) the regular contribution period, b) investment choices, and c) beneficiaries.

An attractive array of high quality investments from which accountholders select their own choices includes no-load mutual funds, stable value and fixed income accounts from three providers:

- \* CNA's Continental Assurance Company
- \* Scudder Trust Company, and
- \* Fidelity Investments

Contributions are fully and immediately vested with the accountholder. Contributions can be made by:

- employer contribution in addition to salary
- salary reduction agreement, or
- a combination of the above

The retirement program is a defined contribution plan. Thus the benefits payable in retirement are not a percentage of one's salary but rather a function of many factors, i.e., size of contributions made, allocation of contributions; number of years in plan, varying investment rates of return during the accumulation period and during retirement, and options chosen at retirement.

For details on enrollment in the plan, members should contact:

**The Joint Retirement Board for Conservative Judaism  
Seven Penn Plaza Suite 720  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 947-2400**

