

ARYEH RUBIN

9801 COLLINS AVE
SUITE 17Z
BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA 33154
OFFICE (305) 868-0092
FAX (305) 868-0065

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26 Nisan, 5756

TO MARTIN HOFFMAN
PRESIDENT, SAMUEL SCHECK HILLEL COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL
cc: BOARD OF GOVERNORS and SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATE OF HILLEL'S METHODOLOGIES OF EDUCATION

ON THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

"Our goal should be to make it possible for every Jewish person, child or adult, to be exposed to the mystery and romance of Jewish history, to the enthralling insights and special sensitivities of Jewish thought, to the sanctity and symbolism of Jewish existence, and to the power and profundity of Jewish faith. As a motto and declaration of hope, we might adapt the dictum that says, "They searched from Dan to Beer Sheva and did not find an am ha'aretz,' usually understood as an ignoramus, an illiterate, may for our purposes be redefined as one indifferent to Jewish visions and values, untouched by the drama and majesty of Jewish history, unappreciative of the resourcefulness and resilience of the Jewish community, and unconcerned with Jewish destiny. Education in its broadest sense, will enable young people to confront the secret Jewish tenacity and existence, the quality of Torah teaching which fascinates and attracts irresistibly. They will then be able, even eager, to find their place in a creative and constructive Jewish community."

*Presented by Professor Isadore Twersky,
Member of the Commission on Jewish
Education in North America,
June 12, 1990*

April 15, 1996
26 Nisan, 5756

Mr. Martin Hoffman
909 N. Miami Beach Boulevard
Suite 201
Miami, FL 33162

Dear Martin:

Since I met with you five months ago and had separate meetings with Irving Canner, Rabbis Finkelstein and Kamensky, and Dr. Raymond Bloom of Central Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) I had numerous interchanges with the senior administration of Hillel, parents, teachers, curriculum experts, officials of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) in New York, and deans of other institutions, both Jewish and secular. It is also one and a half years that our child is enrolled in Hillel, an adequate period of time to make some observations.

WORTHY OF PRAISE

"He who teaches the son of his neighbor the Torah, Scripture ascribes to him as if he had begotten him."

- RAV SAMUEL BEN NACHMANI

IN THE NAME OF RAV JONATHAN , TRACTATE SANHEDRIN 19B

Hillel is and will continue to be a pillar of Jewish education in Miami. One needs only to attend the annual dinner to witness first hand the pride and selfless commitment of the Hillel family to the mutual goal of providing a first-rate Jewish and secular education.

Rabbi George Finkelstein, newly installed as dean, has brought an added dimension to Hillel, and positive changes are already occurring. He brings to Miami a reputation of devoted commitment to his students which is evident to those who see him interact with them. The other newcomer to the administration, Rabbi Yehoshua Kamensky, brings an enlightened perspective to the Jewish Studies department. A traditionalist with a keen sense of the realities of today's Hillel, he is admirably prepared to meet the needs of the future.

In stark contrast to these times of corporate downsizing, reduced corporate and charitable giving, Hillel continues to grow, prosper, and remain financially solvent. The will, commitment, and collective responsibility of providing a Jewish education is indeed inspiring and should serve as a model for other Jewish communities. It's a remarkable achievement.

ONE MAN'S PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

"Educate the youngster according to his way, then even when he grows old he shall not depart from it."

- PROVERBS 22:6

In this critique of some of the methodologies and the direction of Hillel's educational processes, I wish to note that, for the most part, we have been pleased with our daughter's teachers. She has learned a tremendous amount as prescribed by the mandated curriculum.

I am not a professional educator. I do, however, bring the perspective and experience of having been involved with our daughter's previous school, Rodeph Sholom, and having had a personal affiliation with the Abraham Joshua Heschel School, both in New York, both progressive, and both with integrated curricula. While the opinions reflected herein are mine alone, I have discussed these issues with some Hillel parents, and their experiences and opinions have no doubt influenced my perspectives. I have also integrated information gleaned from articles, journals on education, and mission statements from other schools.

This letter, which focuses on the lower school, is not intended as a curriculum or educational plan outline but rather as a basis for discussion and review. Hence, I have elected not to present samples of student and teacher classroom materials, plans or assignments, though they are available.

I have consulted with a number of parents who withdrew their children from Hillel and enrolled them in other private schools. Their criticisms of Hillel were generally strong, and while their chosen new schools were not always ideal, they felt that segments of Hillel's educational system could use reevaluation. A significant percentage of the Hillel parent body believe the students' educational potential is not being fully realized, which results in precious classroom time not being maximized.

Before I outline some of the specific shortcomings (I feel compelled to repeat here that only specific methods of education are the subjects of my critique; the devotion, commitment, and philanthropy of the Board are exceptional) that at times may appear to be severe, I am hopeful that the Board of Governors, administration, and yourself accept this document in the spirit that it is being composed—my only motivation is to achieve the best education possible for the children of Hillel.

OPPORTUNE TIME FOR CHANGE

"Man clinging to his old ways is one of the causes which prevent men from finding truth."

- MAIMONIDES, *GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED* I: 31

Our children's generation is coming of age at a critical juncture in history. The age of information, the digital era, is bound to create more havoc and uprootedness—and opportunities than the industrial revolution caused in our grandparents' generation. The age of entitlement, job security, and greater expectations are over. The gathering, processing, and imparting of information are dramatically different today than they were only 10 years ago. And it will only become more bewildering to those who are unprepared.

As such, the old methods will no longer work. What sufficed for our generation will fall short for our children's. Some institutions acted on these changes a decade ago. Others will only react twenty years hence—some because of an inherent resistance to change, others because of feasibility issues. (How many one-room school houses persisted into the 20th century?) Just as it is important for physicians to keep up with medical literature or lawyers to keep abreast of recent rulings, educational systems need to root out the methodologies that are no longer effective and adopt those that improve learning.

Hillel is well-positioned to incorporate overdue changes. We have a new administration that is not burdened with previous baggage. There are new methodologies in education that have proved successful, and new technologies make their implementation feasible.

TWO EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

"The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards."

- ANATOLE FRANCE

The basic approach of Hillel's system of educating its students is what Dr. William Glasser, the author of *The Quality School*, would call a "policy of coercion," a system based on authority rather than cooperation in which teachers drive the students rather than lead them. Much of the school work that could be made interesting becomes drudgery in such a system.

Under Hillel's current system, classes center on teachers who spend much of their time controlling (and often raising their voices to maintain their control) the children who sit at their desks for hours on end. Such classes frustrate the teachers, and the students often resent such classes. Generally, all children are taught at the same pace, to the disadvantage of more-advanced students and to the detriment of less-advanced students. Consequently, students' work is not up to the quality it could and should be.

Under student-centered systems, classes are broken into units and learning proceeds at different paces and often on different subjects. Independent thinking, creativity, self-generated study, and cooperative participation are encouraged. Teachers become leaders rather than authoritarians. Control is not an issue. Children have more self-esteem and learn at their own paces. Quality work is the result.

Under the authoritarian system, the focus becomes scholastic attainment, while in the student-centered system, natural curiosity is encouraged. In the former, the curriculum is rigid; in the latter, the curriculum is constantly reevaluated and fine-tuned to make it more relevant.

In the one, *yirat shomayim* (fear of God) is stressed; in the other, *ahavat shomayim* (love of God) is the focus. In the former, children are often lost in their own spaces; in the latter, children are engaged and attentive. In the one, communication with parents is infrequent; in the other, the environment is open and parents are integrally involved. In the former, mind-numbing ditto sheets and a multitude of tests and quizzes are the norm; in the latter, children are assigned independent projects that integrate various subject matter and incorporate concrete experiences from and into their daily lives.

In the one, the *mitzvot* are presented with heavy doses of reward and punishment; in the other, the sanctity and mystery of our heritage receives priority. In the former, the environment is often lethargic; in the latter, the atmosphere is inspired. In the one, the sacred is limited to the text; in the other, the *kedusha* (holiness) is palpable everywhere.

In the former, the children are admonished with ridicule and become shy; in the latter, they are surrounded by encouragement and beam confidence. In the one, the teacher often directs the student from above; in the other the teacher-student relationship is one of mutual dignity. The former breeds resentment and insecurity, the latter breeds tolerance and self-esteem.

Just as there is no school that maintains all the lofty and often ideal standards of a student-centered system, Hillel is not encumbered with all the stresses of the authoritarian system. It should be the goal of every school to teach the skills necessary to excel in a competitive world while at the same time excite students' intellect, nurture their intellectual curiosity, and imbue them with a love of learning. Hillel should strive to incorporate as many of the significant advantages of the student-centered system in any new plan that is undertaken.

ON SPECIALTY SUBJECTS

"The element of artistic creativity cannot be left completely to spontaneous achievement. It is a plant that must carefully and tenderly be nurtured."

- RABBI MORDECAI A. KAPLAN

With forethought, adequate resources, and superior direction, the specialty classes and programs at Hillel can be superb. Witness the dramatics department under the able tutelage of Michael

Andron. The energy, joy, and accomplishments of the school plays under his direction (*Little Shop of Horrors* is only the most recent in a string of successes) are exemplary.

Other departments do not seem to be faring as well. Perhaps allotted time is a factor. Moving the children for a half hour at a time to art, music, or science (with 10 minutes to settle down) doesn't allow for much learning, creativity, or skills development. It certainly doesn't muster enthusiasm. These specialty classes should have the students hopping. Ask the children whether they enjoy library (other than a break from sitting at their desks), or ask their parents if they benefit from it.

Integration of art, science, and music into the general subject curriculum may foster additional interest in those subjects. A possible option may be to double the time for art or music and alternate subjects each semester or monthly. Certainly, curriculum experts and teacher training can help make uninteresting interludes exciting avenues for stimulus of the children's imagination.

ON CHILDREN'S PRAYER SERVICES

"We cannot rest until every child, boy and girl, receives a proper moral education."

-RABBI M.M. SCHNEERSON, THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

On this issue, we should move beyond the normal institutional approach to *tefilla*, and incorporate this as a learning experience on how to *daven* (pray) properly. Instead of a half hour of repetitive prayers, mantra-like, without much understanding of the prayer's content or of the prayers' effects on their spiritual lives, part of these prayer sessions should be devoted to an explanation of their meaning, who authored them, how the *siddur* and the *tefillot* were compiled, and the different nuances of *ashkenaz* and *sfard*.

Providing the children with the prayers' meanings now may add a dimension to their spirituality that repetition alone will not.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

"We are putting the future at the fingertips of your children. We must not send our children into a 21st Century unprepared for the world they will inhabit and the jobs they will have to fill."

- PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, March 9, 1996,

Speech in Concord, CA helping put classrooms in California on the Internet

The importance of computers and technology cannot be overemphasized. Their importance is twofold, both as learning tools for making subjects exciting (motivated teachers and varied resources available through computer technology should be used to effectively impart knowledge) and as means to an end—the future is technology. Those who will be adept at early ages will be the hackers of tomorrow. And the hackers of tomorrow will have significant advantages in the job market - whatever their choice's of careers.

The state of computer learning at Hillel has fallen behind current educational standards. The lab, visited by most students once a week for half an hour, is woefully inadequate. A recent assignment was to type a poem that was up on the board. For 6-year olds who are experts at Sega and Nintendo, a typing assignment that involves copying and no creativity is out of place, and it is neither challenging nor at all didactic.

Computers installed in the secular classrooms last year are most often used as rewards for children to play on at the end of class. Though very little, if any, attempt at training teachers in this field has been made, this issue, fortunately, is being addressed through the Technology Committee at the urging and generous largesse of Alan Blaustein, the president of Maxnet. He donated computers, hardware, and hubs last year. He will soon provide, at no charge, the wiring for a functioning network for the entire elementary school along with a significant amount of additional hardware, and he has offered to assist bringing the administration's and the high school's computer systems up to speed. (The estimated size of this donation exceeds \$250,000.) The Technology Committee is headed by Rabbi Kamensky, who has been admirably moving the committee along.

The Board and the Steering Committee should implement the recommendations of the committee forthwith and immediately undertake a vigorous technology training program for the faculty. Furthermore, the Board should set a goal of a laptop on every student's desk as soon as possibly feasible. In several years, it will probably be a requirement; why not ensure our students that advantage now?

CHILDREN'S EXCITEMENT

"Imagination is more than knowledge."

- ALBERT EINSTEIN

It appears that in many classes the work does not seem to be exciting, and the children are not enjoying their learning. Many are off in some other space for some of the time. The general response of "show me a kid who likes going to school" is simply not true.

There are many Jewish schools where the kids look forward to going to school in the morning, where learning is fun, where knowledge for the sake of knowledge (and not for grades) is fostered at an early age. Stop a child at the Abraham Joshua Heschel (non-denominational) school or SAR (Orthodox), or Rodeph Sholom (Reform), or Solomon Schechter (Conservative) at Newton, or White Plains, or Beit Rabban (Orthodox), or Beth David (Conservative) right here in South Miami. These children are excited by what is happening in the classroom; the electricity is in the air. Teachers are excited to be a part of the teaching cycle, and parents are overjoyed with their children's education.

What may have worked ten, fifteen, twenty years ago doesn't work today. Filling the children's baskets with data is passé and breeds boredom; coercion turns off students in the long run.

Igniting sparks under the basket so children seek to learn on their own is what will generate happy and motivated students and provide us, our community, and our people with the type of graduates we all strive for.

NESHAMA, SPIRIT AND ENERGY

"One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers but with gratitude to those who touch our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of a child." - CARL JUNG

An educational system should stimulate growth in several different developmental areas simultaneously, including enhancing students' creative and cognitive abilities, their emotional needs, their physical fitness, their social development, and their spirituality in a Jewish manner. Where does Hillel stand in these areas? Are we maximizing our potential for encouraging such growth?

Our goals should be to cultivate students who are able to think critically, logically and independently. Mediocrity is not an option. We should teach them to cooperate with others to achieve mutual goals, to lead when necessary, and to be catalysts for positive change and progress in the secular and Jewish communities.

When teaching our children about the holidays, very often details are stressed, while the bigger pictures, the majesty and awe of the holy periods, are for the most part absent. While all the most minute details of Yom Kippur were drilled into the students, the concept of *cheshbon hanefesh*, the accounting of the soul which would surely enhance their appreciation of the meaning, spirituality, and holiness of Yom Kippur, fell by the wayside. Rosh Hoshana and Yom Kippur as they were communicated to the children were, I'm sorry to say, sterile.

Hillel needs to become less rigid and incorporate more *neshama* into its being. With that comes *ruach*, spirit and energy, creating more than just a school where Jewish kids go.

THE TEACHERS

"My idea of education is to unsettle the minds of the young and inflame their intellects" - ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS

We must provide the tools, the training, and the environment to encourage the teachers to become better at what they do. I have attached an excerpt of the CIJE's plan of action on teacher training. The teaching staff must be shown the merits of a more progressive approach. One-day seminars accomplish little; training programs and retreats should be required of all teachers. CAJE should be encouraged to motivate the teachers with ongoing in-service programs.

Educational consultants in curriculum methodologies need to be retained to help us redirect our

school. Existing resources, such as CIJE, JESNA, and ISM (Independent School Management), must be tapped. Teachers should be encouraged to teach each other and be full participants in the design of any new plans.

A majority of our teachers can be guided into the 21st Century, some will have to be dragged, and a few, I suspect, will not be able to adapt. Ultimately, I firmly believe that teachers should be required to meet parent's and administrator's demands for accountability in the classroom; if they do, they should be recognized, cited, and rewarded financially (*see* Teachers' Salaries below). If they do not meet specific goals, then they should find employment elsewhere. Retaining teachers who do not meet our standards is misplaced compassion. Our hearts should be with the students; an incompetent teacher can cause scar tissue that will last a lifetime. *"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops"* - Henry Adams

PRELIMINARY IDEAS

"The world endures only for the sake of the breath of school children"

- RESH LAKISH

IN THE NAME OF RAV JUDAH THE PRINCE, TRACTATE SHABBAT 119B

Also the credo of the Miami-based, education-focused Jim Joseph Foundation

I have discussed with Rabbi Finkelstein that he consider a plan, beginning in September, whereby one class in each grade of the lower school (first through sixth grade) would set up progressive classrooms with a student-centered approach as discussed herein.

Let's consider the possible ramifications of this experiment. a) It's not popular with the kids, parents, teachers or administration. We tried it. It doesn't work. We close it. b) The program is highly successful. The kids are radiant, the parents want in, the teachers and administration are filled with pride. We expand the program. c) It's moderately successful some are totally enthusiastic and others luke warm. Some of the didactic methods are found to be worthwhile and popular and are integrated into the traditional classroom. The school is energized with new approaches.

My own prediction is that after a reasonable adjustment period, the program will be successful and the school will become a more progressive institution. With immediate attention, this program can be implemented by the fall. The teachers could be trained during the summer, with continual training seminars during the year.

If a child graduates from Hillel as the same person who came in and all we added were data, then the school has failed in its mission. If Hillel equips students to function as informed, active, and committed members of society in general and the Jewish community in particular then the school has succeeded.

ON AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

"We integrate the child's world. If your worlds are separated, you're making an implicit statement that you have to choose between them. If the worlds are together, being Jewish is a part of your being."

- PETER GEFFEN, founding director of the Heschel School

In an ideal world, the teaching of all subjects, both secular and Jewish, would be integrated into a unified curriculum that represents the mosaic of Miami Jewry and includes the multifaceted spectrum of Jewish philosophies, beliefs, and practices. This is an attainable goal, but a first step should be the implementation of the programs discussed herein. Incorporating an integrated curriculum may be too cumbersome right away. It should, however, be part of any medium-term planning, and it should be among our goals.

ON TEACHERS' SALARIES

"Life is amazing; and the teacher had better prepare himself to be a medium for that amazement."

- EDWARD BLISHEN

Our teachers are notoriously underpaid. If we are to attract the quality staff we desire, we must raise the salaries of our teachers to allow our staff an improved standard of living. While salaries for both secular and Judaica teachers are generally low in South Florida, supply and demand would require that salaries be raised so we can compete with New York, Boston, and top-level South Florida schools for the best educators.

That same supply and demand theory warrants that teachers schooled and trained in the newer and more progressive technologies and methodologies be paid higher salaries than those who are not. And at the point in time when those on the Hillel faculty have trained and adapted to the newer and evolved teaching programs, their salaries should then match those of their previously trained peers.

UPGRADING THE SYSTEM

"Let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own."

- ETHICS OF THE FATHERS 4:15

A successful school system is based on a coordinated tripod: the administration and faculty, the parent body, and the officers. To effect positive change, these three elements must move in unison. The senior administration knows the system and would like to upgrade it. The parents intuitively know where improvements can be made, but they are, at the end of the day, powerless to fix it.

Mr. Hoffman, you represent the most powerful leg, the one whose edicts can recommend, enforce, and budget the necessary reforms to effect the changes. The office you represent has

been doing a superb job fiscally, providing an infrastructure for more than 1,400 students to receive a Jewish education. And it has the capacity and responsibility to implement positive changes.

ON GOVERNING BODIES

The governing bodies, i.e., the Executive and Steering Committees, should invite additional individuals who have children in the school, those who are naturally in tune with the day-to-day needs of the institution. While devoted positions have historically gone to financial supporters, perhaps Hillel can pioneer a more balanced representation.

GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT

There is a significant number of parents who are dissatisfied with aspects of the curriculum. They meet to discuss and vent their frustrations. Why, you may ask, if they aren't happy with Hillel, don't they send their children elsewhere? Some have, and some will, but for most who desire a traditional Jewish education for their family, Hillel represents the only option. Thus, the desire for positive change.

It would benefit all segments of the school to use the talent, will, and expertise of our concerned parent body. Many will not rest until changes are made or another Jewish day school is founded that is more progressive and child-oriented. It has been suggested by one educational organization that based on their experience with other communities, it would probably take less collective will and effort to start another school than to dislodge the rigidity of 25 years' experience. My response to them, and to you, is that I believe in the concept that there is strength in unity and that in our case we can do whatever is necessary to mold a better institution.

FOUNDATION FUNDING

There are a number of charitable foundations who fund innovative Jewish education ventures committed to progressive change (to list a few: Charles Bronfman Foundation, The Lipper Foundation, Wechsner Foundation, Everett Foundation, Covenant Foundation, Ida Crown Foundation, Avi Chai, The Milliken Family Foundation, Bader Foundation, Haas Family Foundation, Mandel Associated Families Foundation, Skirball Foundation, Revson Foundation, Fund for Jewish Education/Gruss Life Monument, Nat Cummings Foundation, and the Miami-based Jim Joseph Foundation). In order for Hillel to tap into this vein of funding, it must first apply to such foundations. A grant writer would be a most wise investment. Second, foundations look to fund innovative and creative models whose examples would serve the wider Jewish day-school movement, a goal we should strive to attain.

MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Besides continuing to nudge along certain changes, I have made certain financial commitments over 1996-97 toward achieving my goals with but two provisos: a) that these funds be used

specifically for student-centered educational programs discussed herein and tools that would enhance teacher training (I have already committed to funding a workshop headed by Dr. Sima Haruv, of Hebrew University, to train the teachers in innovative methods of teaching Hebrew, to bring several Hillel administrators to New York to observe the methodologies of Heschel and Rodeph Sholom, and to provide for attendance at a series of workshops in California) and b) that our children continue to attend Hillel.

IN CLOSING

I have addressed a multitude of issues affecting Hillel. My motivation is to stimulate discussion, and provoke debate on implementation of the needed changes. Whether you agree or disagree with any, all, or none of my comments, let us talk and move forward.

I am available at any time to discuss or assist in any of these issues with you, members of the Governing Board, or any Hillel parent. I hope to meet with you and other concerned parents in the very near future to discuss the well-being of the institution that is preparing our children for tomorrow. Paraphrasing Mary Jean LeTendre: *Judaism's future walks through the doors of Hillel everyday.*

Sincerely,



Aryeh Rubin

AR/ms

Enc.

cc: Board of Governors

Senior Administrative Staff

A PLAN for ACTION

In Communities

How can a community design a comprehensive plan to improve its teaching personnel?

Like Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee, a community can profile its teachers and educational directors to learn precisely where their strengths lie and which areas need improvement. *The CIJE Study of Educators* module will become available for this purpose in 1995.

A community can then tailor a plan to meet the specific needs of its own educators. Such a plan should take into account:

a. **Content:** The plan should address the content needs of individual teachers in education, Jewish studies, and in the integration of the two.

b. **Differentiation:** The plan should address the distinct needs of novice and experienced teachers; the different ages and affiliations of students; and the various settings in which classroom education takes place—day schools, supplementary schools, and pre-schools.

c. **Systematic Training Opportunities:** One-shot workshops do not change teachers or teaching. Rather, seminars, courses, and retreats—linked to carefully articulated requirements, goals, and standards—should be offered in the context of a long-term, systematic plan for professional development.

d. **Community Incentives:** Any plan should motivate teachers to be involved in substantive, ongoing in-service education. Community-sponsored incentives for teachers' professional development include stipends, release time, scholarships, and sabbaticals. Ultimately, professional development must be linked to salary and benefits. (One North American community, for example, bases its day school allocation on teacher certification and upgrading rather than on the number of students.)

e. **Teacher Empowerment:** The plan should allow opportunities for teachers to learn from each other through mentoring, peer learning, and coaching. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in the design of these training opportunities.

In addition to these components drawn from the study, a comprehensive communal plan should include the following elements:

f. **Leadership:** The plan should recognize what has been learned from educational research: The educational director is indispensable in creating a successful environment for teaching and learning. For teachers to implement change, they must be supported by leaders who can foster vision. These leaders must also be committed, knowledgeable, skilled—and engaged in their own professional development. In 1995, CIJE will release a policy brief on the background and professional training of the educational directors in the communities surveyed.

g. **Evaluation:** The plan should include the monitoring of ongoing initiatives in professional development to provide feedback to policy makers and participants, and the evaluation of outcomes.

h. **Compensation:** The plan should make it possible for qualified teachers who wish to teach full-time to be able to do so and receive both salary and benefits commensurate with their educational background, years of experience, and ongoing professional development. (Several North American communities have created the position of "community teacher," which enables a teacher to work in more than one setting, holding the equivalent of a full-time position with the appropriate salary and benefits.) A future CIJE policy brief will focus on issues of salary and benefits for Jewish educators.

Most important, a well-designed plan for the professional development of Jewish educators in a community is not only a way to redress teachers' lack of background. It is also a means of renewal and growth that is imperative for all educators. Even those who are well prepared for their positions must have opportunities to keep abreast of the field, to learn exciting new ideas and techniques, and to be invigorated by contact with their colleagues.