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Boston, Mass. New Jewish High School planning. 1994-1996.

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Dear Daniel -

9/6/96

Congratulations and most sincere best wishes for a smashing success in your new venture. You have a marvelous opportunity to set a model for other cities, and a convincing proof that this idea of a community high school can work.

I remember some years ago we spoke about your role in Baltimore, and I urged you to try to persuade Meyerhoff to set up such a community high school. Well - I'm still working on him and Lee Handler toward the same goal.

Anyway - you now have a great challenge. And I'm sure you will succeed. I read your article in Sh'ma and the tone was just right.

So, my friend, this will be a fateful New Year for you, and all the other people associated with the project. You know you can call on me for any help or advice you may need.

אשריך מלך אלהים

Best regards,
Herb



27/516
September 6, 1996
22 Elul 5756

Inside...

**School's in session.
The shofar is sound-
ing. And we are back
with a full agenda.
We begin with
strategies for
recasting the Ameri-
can Jewish land-
scape.
Three bold ideas;
three passionate
voices.**

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Sh'ma

A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

The promise of community high schools ■ Daniel Lehmann

There is a growing chorus of voices in American Jewish life calling for the transformation of American Judaism. Sociologists, theologians and historians are claiming that the institutions created nearly a century ago as the cornerstones of American Judaism may be inadequate to sustain a vibrant Jewish community in the 21st century. As American Jews reimagine the structure of the Jewish community in which they live, old institutions may lose their power and new institutions may emerge to address contemporary needs. One new institution that seems to be developing with great rapidity and energy as we come to the end of the millennium is the community Jewish day high school.

New Creations For New Needs

Community Jewish day high schools have existed for some time in communities like Washington DC, Philadelphia and more recently in Denver and Los Angeles. But within the past year a flurry of activity has led to the establishment of new Jewish community high schools in Boston and Atlanta with discussions underway for the establishment of similar schools in Cleveland, Minneapolis, Phoenix, San Diego and Seattle. These new schools are multi-denominational, community-based schools that have developed from the vision and commitments of educated laypeople with the professional support of local Federations.

While some would argue that the community Jewish high school is merely a

natural outgrowth of the day school movement and introduces little that is new to the American Jewish scene, I would like to offer a different perspective. It is my contention that the Jewish community high school offers a unique response to a new set of needs that have arisen in the Jewish community of the United States.

Union If Not Unity

Unlike the vast majority of elementary day schools, the community Jewish high schools that are being created are not affiliated with a particular denomination. The decision to make these new high schools multi- or trans-denominational can be attributed to two major factors. One is simply the need to pool resources. High schools are very expensive enterprises. More importantly, however, the community high school may be responding to a dissatisfaction with denominational structures among the baby-boomer generation and the need to bridge the rifts between denominations that have often characterized Jewish life in America.

There are precious few institutions in American Jewish life which allow for an exploration of the basic theological and ideological assumptions of the various religious movements. Even fewer places make it possible for particular understandings of Judaism to be played out in the presence of others who possess very different Jewish commitments and interpretations of Jewish practice. The moral impli-

cations of this are quite serious. Is it not a fundamental tenet of our tradition that moral refinement is created out of the dialectic interplay of opposing perspectives? Can our religious movements afford the luxury of splendid isolation?

Advancing Our Pedagogic Development

College and university Hillel's are often a good model for this type of dynamic interchange, but unfortunately only a small fraction of the undergraduate student's educational experience is framed by Jewish institutions. The emerging Jewish community high school, with its various prayer services and religiously diverse faculty, presents an opportunity to create a new type of Jewish interchange that can shape a generation of Jews who understand the particularity of their own commitments in the context of the broader Jewish community.

The Jewish community high school also represents a new level of seriousness about Jewish education and a new commitment to the particularism of Jewish identity. Elementary day school education, by its very nature, did not challenge the notion that Jewish education was primarily a pre-bar/bat mitzvah enterprise. The establishment of community Jewish high schools, however, takes day school education well beyond the bar/bat mitzvah years into the thick of adolescent identity formation.

The high school years represent a period of intellectual and social development that has been virtually untouched by the advantages of day school education. While youth groups and camps have for some time been able to impact positively on Jewish identity during these important years of a young adult's life, formal Jewish education has had little opportunity to create a sophisticated and literate Jewish community. The students who graduate from these schools will have the skills and knowledge base to conduct their Jewish lives on much firmer and deeper ground. Precisely at the stage when young Jews will be discovering their analytic and creative potential and exploring ideas that will determine their view of the world, they will be engaging in serious Jewish study that will infuse their consciousness with Jewish sources of meaning.

The Challenges

These challenges confronting these new institutions are formidable. Will these schools be able to reach beyond the current day school population to educate a broader spectrum of the community? Can students representing a

RABBI DANIEL LEHMANN, a former Wexner Heritage Foundation Fellow at CLAL, is the founding headmaster of the New Jewish High School of Greater Boston which will be welcoming its first group of students in 1997.

full spectrum of religious affiliations be attracted to such institutions? Will these schools empower students to see their knowledge of Judaism as a vehicle to transform our Jewish community and our society at large? Will these schools be able to foster a dedication to a disciplined spirituality and renaissance of Jewish creativity? Can a pluralistic Jewish high school education set the stage for a truly pluralistic Jewish community? Will a new type of Jew and a new type of Jewish leadership emerge from the educational experiences of these schools? Are there sufficient numbers of inspiring educators to staff these schools? Will the community focus its resources on the financial needs of these new schools?

The answers to these questions are as of yet unknown. But I am greatly inspired by the vision that is giving birth to these new Jewish community high schools, a vision of Jewish education and the Jewish community that is bold and compelling. Community Jewish high schools are not a panacea to the problems of Jewish continuity, but they

Sh'ma A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

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Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility welcomes articles from diverse points of view. Hence, the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the editors. Donations to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility* are tax-deductible. *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility* is available in microform from University Microfilms Internat'l., Ann Arbor, MI.

Book reviews are by Eugene B. Borowitz.

Address all correspondence, subscriptions and change of address notices to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility*, c/o CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, Suite S-300, New York, NY 10016. Telephone: 212-867-8888; FAX: 212-867-8853.

Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility (ISSN 0049-0385) is published bi-weekly except June, July and August, by CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, Suite C-300, New York, NY 10016. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY. Subscriptions: \$29 for two years in U.S.; \$18 for one year; \$21 a year overseas; \$35 for two years overseas; bulk subscriptions of 10 or more to one address, \$9 per subscription; retired or handicapped persons of restricted means may subscribe for one year at half price. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Sh'ma a journal of jewish responsibility*, c/o CLAL, 99 Park Avenue, S-300, New York, NY 10016-1599.

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September 6, 1996

are one new response that has great potential to transform our future. ✦

New ways of giving

■ Evan Mendelson

"Wealth is not new. Neither is charity. But the idea of using private wealth imaginatively, constructively, and systematically to attack the fundamental problems of mankind is new."
John Gardner

We are in the midst of a major shift in the character of American Jewish philanthropy which will effect the shape of our community as we enter the next century. The American Jewish communal enterprise has always been a unique blend of Jewish religious traditions and the democratic traditions of this country. Out of biblical injunctions to protect the poor, orphans, widows and strangers, a vast institutional infrastructure, supported by voluntary philanthropy, has developed. It has helped shape, and been shaped by, the uniquely American nonprofit sector, whose antecedents include the Elizabethan Poor Law and the establishment of the charitable trust in 1601.

The Traditional American Jewish Ways

Foundations, created by the great American industrialists at the end of the nineteenth century, "professionalized" the practice of charity, bringing modern progressive notions of management, efficiency and scientific thought to the enterprise of ameliorating human problems. The early American Jewish way of giving, influenced by a strong religious imperative for individual *tzedakah* and by the modern legal mechanisms that encouraged private philanthropy, evolved into a different model. Individual support for synagogues and welfare agencies grew into a Jewish federated philanthropy of pooled individual contributions that support a defined institutional infrastructure.

Begun in 1895 with the Boston Federation, the federation movement has grown to 178 federated communities. Few independent Jewish foundations existed before

EVAN MENDELSON is Executive Director of the Jewish Funders Network, a national organization of Jewish donors committed to advancing the growth and quality of Jewish philanthropy through more effective grantmaking to Jewish and secular causes.

the 1970's. But as American Jewish wealth grew, as opportunities for philanthropy in the general community increased and as interest in "hands on" giving developed, the number of Jewish foundations grew. There are now over 3,000 Jewish foundations, with more being created every day. The most recent philanthropic model is the growing number of independent donor-advised funds and support foundations associated with Jewish federations. It is estimated that these various "endowment" funds already total over \$3 billion.

What Is Jewish Giving?

Currently the behavior of private Jewish foundations does not differ much from that of individual Jewish philanthropists.

However, certain new trends are emerging. Many Jewish foundations support both Jewish and general causes. Jewish giving by Jewish philanthropists has declined steadily from the first to the fourth generations, from 71% to 36%. This trend is likely to continue as the next generation assumes control of the foundations. Some older, more established foundations relegated Jewish funding to a lump sum given to the local Federation, and/or discretionary contributions by the individual family members. This model is changing as a growing number of foundations are beginning to evaluate their Jewish funding in the same way they assess their general funding. The walls dividing Jewish and universal philanthropy are beginning to be dismantled. New questions are being asked: Can a Jewish organization carrying out intergroup work in the general community be funded from the general community pot? Can a Jewish theater group be funded as part of the arts and culture program area?

An enormous transfer of wealth is expected in this country during the next two decades. Eight to ten trillion dollars will be passed down from Americans over the age of 50 to their children and their grandchildren, creating the largest transfer of wealth in the nation's history. For the Jewish community this raises several important questions. Will the next generation share the philanthropic values of their parents? Will they care about the same causes? Will they seek a different kind of involvement in their communities—American and Jewish?

This younger generation of donors prefers volunteering to sitting on a board, funding homeless projects rather than Jewish nursing homes, and has much less contact and historical experience with the State of Israel. These funders want to be involved in shaping, not just responding to projects. They also want to be validated in their philanthropic choices and in their identities as Jewish

fundes: those who give to a Jewish institution as well as those who give based on Jewish values. Younger generations are often interested in funding different issues and organizations than those supported by their parents and feel that their choices are just as "Jewish" as their parents' choices.

Jewish federations need to be mindful of the unintended negative message that is delivered to the next generation of Jews when the older generation is encouraged to leave its wealth to the Federation Endowment to "ensure" that the Jewish community is taken care of in perpetuity. This message could suggest that the next generation can not be trusted to care about the Jewish community, and might just be a self-fulfilling prophecy!

Foundations, Federations And The Future

New and creative responses will be necessary to meet the challenge of the trends listed above. The growing number of small independent foundations decreases the centralized communal fund that sustains the American Jewish communal infrastructure. Without a communal infrastructure, Judaism as a civilization cannot exist. The mix of essential organizations might change, but the need for stable funding of Jewish institutions is fundamental to the transmission of Jewish values and traditions. Overlap, duplication and wasted dollars can result from foundations acting without communicating with each other and the central communal planning structure. Independent funders should evaluate their funding patterns systematically and focus their funding more strategically if they want to increase their impact. They need to learn or be reminded of the importance and effectiveness of a communal pool of funding that sustains the Jewish infrastructure.

On the other hand, federations must change their language and processes in order to address the fundamental problem of a decreasing annual campaign. Most donors are not interested in "giving to the Federation," but rather in supporting the Jewish communal enterprise.

As the number of new foundations increases over the next few years, there is a need for new models of support to nurture and serve Jewish philanthropists. The Jewish Funders Network is a new national resource organization for individual philanthropists, foundation trustees and staff that provides educational and networking opportunities and a framework for discussion of philanthropic issues without a set agenda.

Many funders are looking to "purchase" administrative and staff support in order to save on the high cost of establishing a private foundation. Jewish federations,

community foundations and some nonprofits now offer some of these services.

Meeting The Donor's Needs

The success of this model for connecting independent funders to the Jewish community, however, depends on whether the support organization is perceived as providing the service that the client wants. As Jewish funders' choices expand, they seek grantmaking assistance in areas with which Jewish federation staff might be unfamiliar or judge as not serving the interests of the organized Jewish community. If Jewish organizations want to develop or retain relationships with independent Jewish funders, they will have to prove to them that they truly represent the client's interests, not what they perceive as the community's interests.

As we begin to reshape the American Jewish community, private foundations will play a central role in supporting the experimentation that can lead to institutionalized change. They represent a uniquely American form of the philanthropic imperative. Those of us who are involved in the re-visioning and re-engineering of the American Jewish communal system must recognize and build on that reality. ✦

Jewish retreats

■ Rachel Brodie

Magic. The number one word, used indiscriminately, by participants and providers alike, to describe the transformative power of retreats. And who isn't in need of a little magic when it comes to drawing people into Jewish communal life and practice? If the recent boom in the retreat business is any indication, a large cross-section of the Jewish community is, indeed, looking to retreats as a magic formula. But are retreats magical? And if so, what impact will they have on the American Jewish community in the 21st century?

The Jewish Retreat Center (JRC), a project of UJA-Federation of New York's Jewish Continuity Commission, is billed not as a place, but as a concept. It does not represent a single site. It provides a network of sites in the Northeast, as well as access to significant programmatic and human resources for Jewish groups seeking to "retreat." These retreats take many forms: synagogue

RACHEL BRODIE was the Founding Director of the Jewish Retreat Center and is currently a Melton Senior Educators' Fellow in Israel.

shabbatonim for families, adult education seminars, school trips and Israel program training institutes.

Advertising for the Jewish Retreat Center has never gone beyond a modest brochure, a handful of ads in the Jewish press and some direct mailings. Yet, now completing its second year, the JRC has served more than 70 Jewish groups directly, on-site, and more than 1,000 individuals and groups indirectly through its referral service.

The Secret To Successful Retreats

How can we account for the overwhelming response? It is the perception that retreats are catalysts for change. Rabbis, educators, and Jewish communal professionals searching to jump-start the acculturation of a group of unaffiliated Jews or energize an apathetic congregation are turning to retreats to work magic on their community.

But are retreats inherently magical? No. Retreats sometimes fail and those that do are usually founded on fundamental misunderstandings of the purpose of retreating. One of the most common mistakes is motivation by what I call "None of us have country homes or the money for Club Med so let's hold a retreat" thinking. Essentially, these retreats are created as vacations—and that's all they become, relaxing but never transformative. And then there are retreats founded on the "forty-eight hour business meeting" plan. These marathon sessions are held in direct violation of the number one retreat rule: don't do unto participants at a retreat what could be done at home. Remember: Retreats are only as good as the planning that goes into them.

Retreats that work well result from attention to detail, clear goals, and a change of setting. The power of retreat settings lies in the intensity of concentrated, uninterrupted time in a special environment, and the intimacies of communal living. But the possibility of affecting individual and/or institutional change through a retreat experience rests directly in the hands of those who create the program and even more, in the hands of those who do the

follow-up. Indeed, the significance of mountaintop revelations or bunkbed bonding is often lost when they occur in a vacuum. Retreat experiences and revelations must be contextualized; relationships formed require further opportunities to be solidified; lessons learned need to be reviewed, and the learning must continue. Remember: the impact of a retreat is only the first step. Follow-up is key.

Even as the impact of a single retreat can be extended through significant follow-up, and the impetus for retreats is slowly extending throughout the American Jewish community, the long-term effect of retreat experiences on the ways and structures of American Jewry is little understood. The Jewish Continuity Commission of New York and a few individual philanthropists are beginning to show a healthy respect for retreat sites and programs, as evidenced by the availability of funds, but it is still too early to evaluate the long-term impact of these efforts.

However, the movement toward embracing retreats does reflect some other trends that are expected to influence the American Jewish community over the next century. These trends include: a more important role for quality informal Jewish education (the primary educational modality of retreats and camps), more cooperation between institutions (the model for a Jewish institution working with the Jewish Retreat Center), and more work being done in smaller groups (the ideal retreat size, depending on the specific agenda, is 30 to 100 people).

Also, retreats serve as safe spaces for Jews to work on identity issues outside their own homes and offer opportunities for Jews to live Jewishly, if only for two days, and not just talk about Jewish life and practice. The move toward the creation of more holistic experiences, through total immersion, is a useful tactic for engaging Jews in the post-*shetl* era. Retreat participants cite the significance of a retreat Shabbat as being complete, not just Friday dinner and Saturday morning services but a safe and easy way to experience and experiment with a full day of rest.

A Virtual Community

Finally, if you ask adult participants what they are looking for in a retreat they inevitably mention their search for community. They lament the lack of extended family and Jewish support systems. Retreats offer people access to community, because they hold the same appeal as *havurot*; they are small, informal and *haimish*. If retreats will have a significant impact on American Jews in the next century, I believe it will be because communal leaders recognize the need for smaller, more intimate,

A HEARTY MAZEL TOV

to

Sh'ma Contributing Editor,
Rabbi Brad Hirschfield and his wife, Becky,
on the birth of their daughter.

sense of community among their members. But retreats are just one model, and we need to develop other creative, more normative responses to these challenges.

Miracles. Many groups who hold retreats need a miracle to motivate the true or lasting transformation they seek for their participants. What many fail to appreciate is that it is the work that goes into planning and programming a retreat that gives retreats a good name. Many people look at the American Jewish community as we approach the 21st century and say that in order to survive we need a miracle. Others look at us and recognize that the difference between miracles and magic is that magic can be made. ✦

Endthoughts

A liberal defense of judgmentalism

■ Steven M. Cohen

David R. Adler (*Sh'ma*, 26/511, "The wrong way to 'jewish continuity'") takes me to task on two occasions for an article on intermarriage and Jewish continuity I had published in *Moment* (December 1994). Adler claims that much Jewish continuity discourse would fall on the racist side of the equation. In this context, he objects to my phrase "diluted ethnicity," as indicated by the decline in intra-group friendships among American Jews. In the same article, he then proceeds to accuse me of adopting a judgmental stance toward the unaffiliated when I drew what he claims is an invidious distinction between 'weaker' (unaffiliated) and 'fitter' (affiliated) Jews.

I am particularly touched by Adler's comments, and not just because it shows he has been reading my work (or some of it). It so happens that we share something in common (not much, I'm afraid, but at least something): Adler is editor of *Response* magazine, a position I held for some time when I was his age, roughly 20 years ago.

Tribalism Is Not Racism

To make this reply to Adler perfectly clear at the outset, I find his critique important, wrong and dangerous.

STEVEN M. COHEN is Professor at The Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

His critique is important because it eloquently articulates widely held sentiments in American Jewry today, particularly, I gather, among his twenty-something generation. No doubt, many would agree with what I regard as his most startling statement: The Jewish community's strictures against intermarriage would, in contemporary American parlance, fall under the racist category.

He is wrong because the Jewish people's historical emphasis on group solidarity, as expressed through marrying Jews and making friends with Jews, is not racist. True, both racism and Jewish tribalism (I happen to like the word, tribalism) share two features in common: They both recognize group differences based primarily on ancestral origin; and they both advocate treating majority and minority groups differently. But beyond these surface similarities lie numerous critical distinctions.

Distinguishing Public Policy From Personal Choice

Racism applies primarily to the public sphere: issues related to jobs, housing, schooling, political office, equal treatment under the law, etc. Jewish tribalism, though, applies to the private sphere: to one's family, religious life, most intimate friendships. The whole thrust of anti-racist movements in the U.S. and elsewhere has been to assure fair and equal treatment in the public sphere, while allowing individuals to construct their private lives as they see fit. No one can seriously claim that the tendency of Americans to seek out spouses and friends of similar cultural background (whether defined by education, region, religion, or ethnicity) is racist. Moreover, religion—even more than the other classifications—is seen as an acceptable basis around which to build family, friendships, and community. Would anyone in their right mind call racist the plea by a committed American Christian (or Mormon or Moslem) leader for religious adherents to marry one another, to make friends within the religious group, to become involved in the religious community, or to live in areas with many co-religionists? If so, then what is racist about urging similar behavior among Jews?

From all of us at *Sh'ma*
to all of you, our family of
readers and friends:

May you enjoy a year of
peace, promise and eternal hope

SHANA TOVA.

Next let us recall the arguments made by proponents of affirmative action for historically excluded minorities. They have claimed (rightly, I believe) that affirmative action differs from racist discrimination because the former give preference to a minority group for admirable purpose, while the latter denies equality to a minority with malevolent intent. Why does not the same logic apply to Jewish tribalism (vs. racism)? The norms of Jewish tribalism ask that Jews see each other as extended family, that they treat each other with special regard, that they take Judaism seriously enough so that they would inevitably seek out other Jews to share their most intimate, family-like times together. Why is that racist?

The Case For Judgmentalism

As for the charge of being judgmental, I plead proudly guilty. Since when are Jews enjoined to refrain from exercising judgment especially with reference to other Jews? Judgment is part and parcel of our tradition, from the Bible, to the Talmud, to the *shtetls* of Europe and *mullahs* of North Africa, to the civil rights and anti-war movements of the sixties, to present-day Israel, and to Jewish families and synagogues in all times and places. We are a judgmental and argumentative people. A long rabbinic tradition, derived from a straightforward reading of the Torah and consistent without culture through time, enjoins us not only to judge, but to reproach and reprove (*hochacha*).

If anything, Jews these days don't judge often enough or harshly enough, and when they do, they too often refrain from expressing their judgments of one another. As I pointed out in *The Case for Communal Conflict* (Response 31, 1976), Jewish communal organizations, particularly Federations, demand consensus over vision, agreement over passion. And Jews everywhere now participate in what my colleague Charles Liebman has called the therapeutic culture, wherein everyone's views no matter how ill-founded are validated by everyone else (I'm okay, you're okay).

Not only does such a spirit contradict every modern ideology of Judaism (so far), it contradicts the spirit of liberalism, the major socio-political ideology of American Jews (to which I happen to subscribe). Liberalism may stand for the right of every individual to express his or her views free of government interference, but it does not automatically validate everyone's views (shades of Voltaire?).

As for the case at hand, when I refer to weaker and fitter or stronger Jews, I am referring to the predictable ability (or inability) of some Jews to survive, as Jews, the rigorous test of modernity; that is, to remain identifiably

Ta sh'ma

We invite you to send us your favorite text and comment. Submissions should not exceed 200 words. Be sure to include proper citation of sources. Hebrew will appear in transliteration.

■ Lee M. Hendler

Ta sh'ma—come and study.

My eyes scan the page for the familiar:
the shape of a letter, the presence of a root
whatever lets me know I am partly home—
able to utter a neural sigh of recognition.
"You I know."

"You I have seen before."
And I am hearing and seeing at once
even though I am only reading and thinking.

Rejoicing in my disorientation
I grope toward Jerusalem.
A willing player in an ancient
game of Blind Man's Bluff.
I think I am getting somewhere
until Torah takes over.
Barely understood concepts play hide and seek with
my brain.

I count to ten and shout my warning
but all the good ideas are already
hidden in the best places.
So I run as fast as my intellect will take me
searching even as I go
for the telltale signs of
passing.

The echo of phrase
the force of act
the sense of moment
the edge of symbol
the sweep of time
the thrust of word
the presence of God.

When I find the last
I cease to play.
Wild pleasure renders up full joy
as I forget where I end and God begins.
For a moment
we are both in the same place.
Studying Torah together.

LEE M. HENDLER lives in Baltimore MD and enjoys the hours she spends studying Torah.

Jewish despite the impact of modern individualism personalism, voluntarism, and universalism, all of which are part of Judaism, but not to the extent that they dominate modern culture. When I say weaker or stronger, I don't necessarily mean worse or better, (although the objective character of strength is related to my subjective evaluation of quality).

We may disagree about what makes a Jew strong or good (or weak or bad). But we ought not have any disagreement that such distinctions exist, and that we ought to articulate our judgment as to who or what exemplifies those characteristics.

Mitzvah Requires Judgmentalism

Finally, I regard Adler's views in these matters as dangerous. If his views on ethnic solidarity prevail, then not only will many Jews intermarry, but American Judaism (unlike its predecessors in time or counterparts in space) will no longer define being Jewish as something ethnic, tribal, or national. If his rejection of judgmentalism prevails, then American Judaism will become the first ever to abandon the conception of commandment (*mitzvah*) and obligation (whether it is derived from God, Torah, rabbis, Jewish history, the Jewish people, the Jewish state, or some other sources). In such an eventuality, American Judaism will lose its transcendental power,

its claim to authenticity, its majestic links to the past and the future, and its ability to provide nurturing, meaningful communities. As sociologist Lawrence Iannacone has demonstrated (in an article entitled, *Why Strict Churches Are Strong*), American religious groups that are too faddish, too loose, and too oriented to individual taste are those which have suffered the most decline over the last thirty years. Those which have become too strict have degenerated into small sects. The key to success has been to find a stance that is somewhat strict, somewhat demanding, and somewhat at variance with the current *zeitgeist*. That is no easy task. But however difficult, it definitely demands both judgment and judgmentalism. ✦

*Sh'ma extends its sincerest condolences
to our friends and supporters*

Joan and Richard J. Scheuer

*on the loss of their beloved son,
Richard J. Scheuer, Jr.*

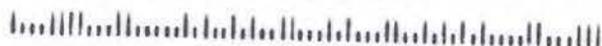
Through his generosity and kindness, he built enduring legacies. May his memory be a comfort to his family and a blessing to all he loved.

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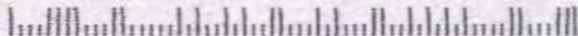
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You are invited to a

Community Reception

welcoming Rabbi Daniel Lehmann

newly-appointed Headmaster of the New Jewish High School

Sunday, June 9, 1996

7:30 PM

Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center

333 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA

Dessert reception following program

Featured Speaker

Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg

Kindly respond by June 3, 1996



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BONNIE HAUSMAN

September 1, 1995

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

(via facsimile: 212-751-3739)

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

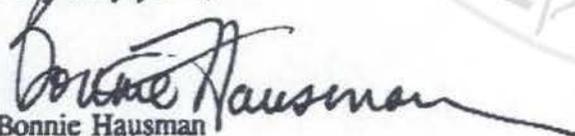
Michael Bohnen and I appreciate the time you gave us last week, your systematic review of our materials with commentary, and especially, your generous offer to assist us identify donors in Boston.

Of course, we will continue aggressively to seek for an ideal site. But, because our target parents have expressed so strongly their hope for a community school by September '97, we must be prepared to open – even in temporary quarters – while the momentum and enthusiasm are high.

Again, we expect our school to have national significance because it will be excellent, and because our enterprise will build a youth network nationally and internationally. Although our day school model differs somewhat from your residential school model, our long-term goals are identical. For this reason, we are counting on you to help us identify an individual with significant resources who shares our vision to establish a network of community day high schools across the country. We hope that you will facilitate our request to this individual to invest at least \$1 million *this year* to help Boston families launch our school.

Finally, a big thanks to (your) Michael also. I will be following up on his suggestions in the next few days.

Very truly yours,


Bonnie Hausman

cc: Michael Bohnen
Michael Paley ✓

70 Neshobe Road • Waban, MA 02168 • Tel: (617) 965-0098 • Fax: (617) 965-7039

"Turn it over, and turn it over again
For everything is found in the Torah"

הַפֶּרֶךְ בַּהּ וְהַפֶּרֶךְ בַּהּ
דַּכְּתִיבָהּ בַּהּ

JEFFREY A. SPITZER

אהרן שפיצר

21 Hammond Street
Leominster, MA 01453
(508) 537-2770

To the parents of Naomi Hausman,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer. My new daughter Leora is happy and healthy, and my life and my household have calmed down somewhat after the wedding of my sister-in-law. I have now had time to reflect upon the year and report on your child's work during the fourth quarter and the year in general.

I have included some descriptive information about the quarter and the year, as well as the exact text (indented) of the comment which has been printed on an address label and affixed to your child's permanent transcript. Please note that while the quarter grade only includes fourth quarter work, my comments may also include references to third quarter work, since there were no comments for the third quarter.

During the fourth quarter in Torah she'b'al Peh, we completed units on *pesach*, *shabbat* and *tzitzit*. The Pesach unit was built on a very rich and complex piece of midrash from the *Mekhilta* which addresses why *B'nai Yisrael* were redeemed from Egypt. The students saw how midrash uses verses and themes from *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* to interpret the Torah. The students used this text to frame discussions of welfare, affirmative action, different psychological responses to sin, fear of the unknown, and taking risks.

Our unit on *shabbat* was designed to address a basic theological question: how do people and God interact in creating the religious experience. Specifically, does God sanctify the *shabbat*, or does Israel? We explored a variety of different approaches in the Bible and in Rabbinic texts, including the *locus classicus* for the idea of partnership with God which is integrally connected to the theme of *shabbat* observance.

Perhaps one of the most sophisticated concepts which we developed this year was the idea of legal nominalism which acknowledges that to some extent, law, including *halakhah*, makes arbitrary distinctions. What should a person who is lost in the desert and does not know which day it is do about *shabbat*? The Talmud's answer is, essentially, that the person should count six days and observe the seventh. When I pointed out that I personally do not believe that the account of Creation in Genesis is scientifically correct, I likened myself, and all of Israel, to travelers in the desert whose observance of *shabbat* is (meaningful and obligatory, but) essentially arbitrary. At the same time, the students had already learned how sanctification of *shabbat* is largely in the hands of the community of Israel, so while I gave voice to their own faith questions, I also supported an authentic, if somewhat reconstructed, view of tradition. *The lesson here is clear. Your child is capable of questioning and responding to the tradition at a very profound level. I see it as our job to encourage that questioning while simultaneously training the child (and ourselves) to respond to the questions authentically and to begin to reconstruct a Judaism with theological coherence and intellectual appeal, based on traditional sources.*

The final unit on *tzitzit* addressed the issues of responsibility and integrity. This unit began with a close reading of the Bamidbar 15 which describes the categories of the intentional and unintentional sinner. It is in this context that the Torah introduces *parashat tzitzit* which we recite as the third paragraph of the *shema*. The lesson we drew in class is that the Torah instructs us to go to extra lengths in order to prevent ourselves from sinning, whether intentionally or unintentionally. *Observance of the Torah requires vigilance and forethought, and the Torah wants to set us up for success.* The midrash which you were to study with your child about the yeshivah student and the prostitute was a rather exaggerated attempt to show the power of

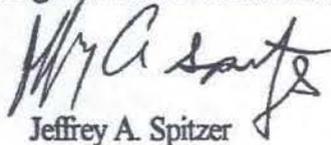
tzitzit. At the same time, that text provided a very dramatic example of how difficult it is to avoid going astray from the Torah. I chose that story because, better than any other text I know, it really illustrates the point of *tzitzit*. If we are to live morally, if we are to live according to the Torah, *we need to think about our actions ahead of time*, we need to prepare reminders for ourselves, and we need to avoid putting ourselves in compromising situations. I think these are good lessons for ourselves and for our children.

Evaluation for the *pesach* unit was based on a quiz and a test. Extensive comments were written for each essay of the *pesach* test; please refer to my comments. Evaluation for the *shabbat* unit was based on a quiz, translation of an unseen text related to the topic, and a letter/essay written by your child to me. Evaluation for the *tzitzit* unit was based on one quiz and one multiple choice/short answer test. Throughout the quarter, I have kept accurate records of class participation which also counts towards the quarter grade.



A year ago, when Mr. Zar-Kessler interviewed me for this position at SSDS, he asked me what my most successful teaching experience had been. I told him about teaching a group of Schechter students from all over the midwest at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin two summers in a row. I never thought that I would get that kind of opportunity again. But *barukh hashem* (and I mean that literally), I will have your child again next year for Torah she'b'al Peh. My goals for next year are rather ambitious, but that will have to wait for next year's Back-to-School night. I hope to see you then, and in the meantime, have a wonderful summer. *Please remember that the most valuable support that you can provide for what we do at Schechter is to continue to live and learn Torah during the summer.*

With the greatest admiration, respect, and affection for anyone who makes the effort to send a child through a school like Schechter,


Jeffrey A. Spitzer



The Academy

A Proposal for a New Community
Jewish High School

Rationale

- Role of day schools in fostering Jewish identity and practice
- Growth of elementary day schools: 4 feeder schools in Greater Boston
- Demographic trends: growing numbers of unserved Jewish students
- Renewed enthusiasm for day school education
- Promote mission of elementary day schools

Research Findings: Predictors of Jewish Involvement

- Studies

- » Mordecai Rimor & Elihu Katz (Avi Chai III) -- 1993
- » Council of Jewish Federations NJPS Study -- 1990

- Conclusions

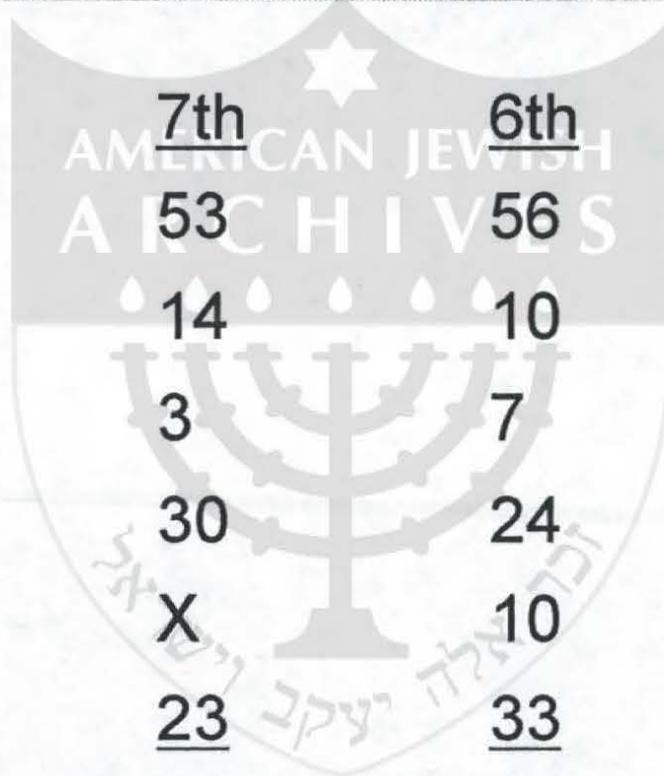
- » Years of Jewish Education Strongest Predictor of Jewish Involvement
- » Day School Education Most Powerful Type of Schooling
- » Jump in level of Jewish Involvement after 9 Years of Schooling

Research Findings: Effects of Jewish Day School

- Schiff/Schneider '94 Study on Y.U. High School Graduates
- Increase in Traditional Observance
 - » 75% from observant families continue observance
 - » Those from non-observant families make Kiddush (73%), observe Kashruth (62%)
- Reduction in Inter-marriage Rates
 - » Reform: from 50% to 15%
 - » Conservative: from 17% to 6%

Current Enrollment of Feeders '94-'95 School Year

	<u>8th</u>	<u>7th</u>	<u>6th</u>	<u>5th</u>
SSDS-GB	43	53	56	55
SSDS-W	X	14	10	17
SSDS-S	X	3	7	13
HILLEL	17	30	24	25
RASHI	X	X	10	14
SSDS-P	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>
TOTAL	<u>80</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>157</u>



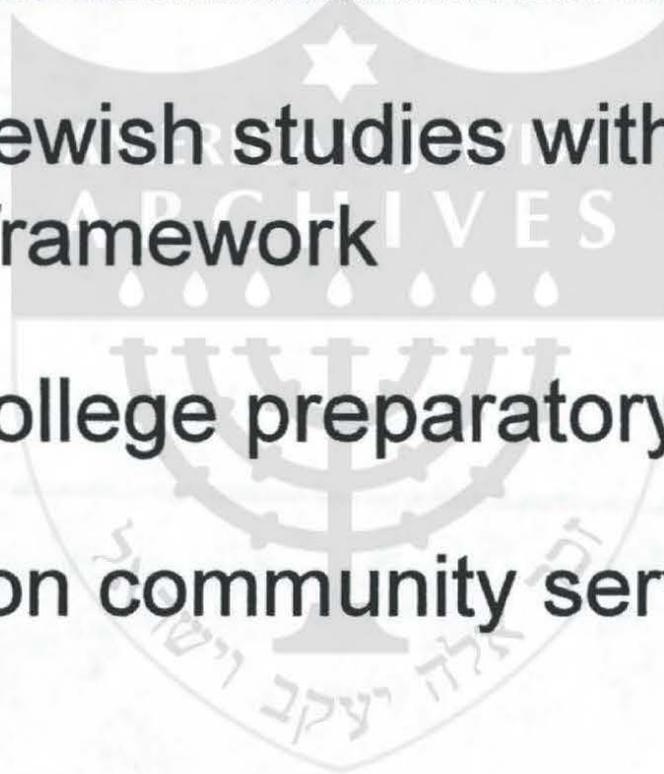
High School Planning Committee

- Mission Statement
- Contacts with High Schools
- Discussions with Brandeis
- Dialogue with Community Leaders



Mission of the School

- Intensive Jewish studies within a traditional framework
- Rigorous college preparatory program
- Emphasis on community service



Planning Goals

- Establish Steering Committee
- Develop Strategic Plan
 - » Recruitment of Headmaster
 - » Governance
 - » Curriculum
 - » Financial Plan
- Develop Community Support
 - » Recruitment of Students
 - » Support of Community Leaders



Committee Structure

- 
- **Academic Program**
 - » General Studies
 - » Judaic Studies/Hebrew Language
 - » Co-Curricular
 - » Academic Support
 - **Inst. Development**
 - » Mission/Admin. & Religious Practice
 - » Head Search
 - » Governance
 - » Finance/Dev.
 - » Recruitment
 - » Facility

Timetable

- Target Opening: September 1997
- Headmaster Selected: May 1996
- Financial Plan: November 1995
- Focus Groups: Fall 1995
- 7-Figure Seed Funds: Spring 1996

School Vignettes: Year 2000

- Tefilah/Jewish Life
- Judaic Text Study
- Curricular Integration
- Academic Excitement & Challenge
- Community Service
- Hebrew Language
- Israel
- Co-curricular Life

School Vignettes: A Walk Through the School in 2000

- Tefillah/Jewish Life
 - » Choices for a Pluralist Community: Traditional/Mechitza, Egalitarian/Conservative, Reform/Creative
 - » Cross-Fertilization to foster spirituality of all
- Judaic Text Study
 - » Intensive track
 - Heavy emphasis on Chevruta
 - Thematic Orientation
 - » Mechina Track for Intro. to Text Study

School Vignettes: A Walk Through the School in 2000

- **Curricular Integration**

- » Biblical & Rabbinic Texts Integrated with Literature, History, Art & Music
- » Block Scheduling for Integration of Disciplines

- **Academic Excitement & Challenge**

- » A/P Courses
- » Research on the Internet
- » Close connections of Students & Teachers
 - Small Setting
 - Faculty that engenders excitement/respect
- » Diversity
- » Emphasis on Writing

School Vignettes: A Walk Through the School in 2000

- **Community Service:** ★ Required course credit, not extra-curricular
- **Hebrew Language**
 - » Language of discussion with other schools on the Internet
 - » Language of some portion of literary magazine
 - » Hebrew teacher engages kids in discussion of last night's ball game in Hebrew
- **Israel: A Semester of Study in Israel**

School Vignettes: A Walk Through the School in 2000

● Co-Curricular Life

- » School as a neighborhood for students
 - A place to hang out & feel comfortable
 - A place for which they are responsible
- » Debate, Drama, Sports, etc. integral part of School life
- » Director of Co-Curricular Life an Important Professional Staff Member

New Jewish High School

Informational Meeting for Rabbinical Community

Leventhal-Sidman JCC

August 24, 1995

28th of Av, 5755

Agenda

- 
- I. Introduction
 - II. Opening Remarks
 - III. Rationale for School
 - IV. Progress to Date
 - V. Timetable
 - VI. School Vignettes: Year 2000 (5761)
 - VII. Questions
 - VIII. Next Steps

DRAFT OF AUGUST, 1995

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY THE ACADEMY

TheAcademy is a Jewish coeducational high school that integrates intensive Jewish studies with a rigorous college preparatory program. Our goal is to inspire students to reach the highest standards of citizenship, scholarship, morality, and spirituality. While traditional Jewish observance serves as a framework for religious practice within the school, the Academy welcomes students with diverse backgrounds and beliefs, drawing from families across all denominations.

Our purpose is to sustain our vital American and Jewish communities by offering an educational environment that explores the disciplines and values that have shaped both traditions while it nourishes the talents and spiritual growth of each young person. The school culture supports the role of the individual as a proactive force in building community.

The Judaic and General studies emphasize classical text and interpretation; mastery of language skills as a modern form of communication and as key to textual analysis; scientific and mathematical proficiency; philosophical exploration; and, historical perspectives. Our approach to all subject matter is one of inquiry and problem-solving. Because the high school years mark a critical period of intellectual, ethical, physical, and social development, the Academy offers an array of opportunities, including athletics and the arts, for young people to explore their uniqueness, affirm their authenticity and define their identity. Faculty who exemplify the personal and intellectual qualities that we value are the cornerstones of our success. The Academy's program of community service reflects our goals of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), *Tzedek* (fostering justice), and *Ahavat Yisrael* (love of Israel).

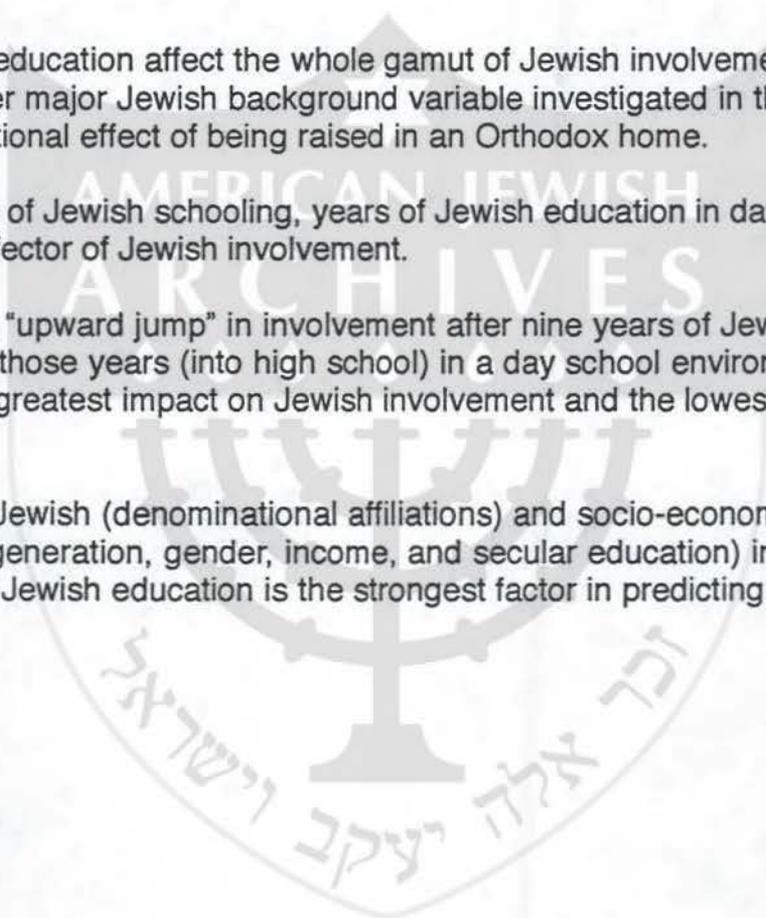
Graduates of the Academy are knowledgeable about their dual heritage; appreciate critical scholarship; and, are committed to leading a Jewishly-informed life. By adhering to the tenets *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, that all Jews are responsible for each other, Academy graduates will contribute to strengthening American society and Jewish community.

Jewish Involvement of The Baby Boom Generation:
Interrogating the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey
by Mordechai Rimor and Elihu Katz

The Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research
funded by the AVI CHAI Foundation

This study devotes two of its six chapters to the relationship between Jewish involvement and Jewish education. The following excerpts highlight the conclusions of these chapters:

1. Years of Jewish education affect the whole gamut of Jewish involvement, much more than any other major Jewish background variable investigated in the study, even more than the additional effect of being raised in an Orthodox home.
2. Of the four types of Jewish schooling, years of Jewish education in day school is by far the strongest effector of Jewish involvement.
3. Considering the "upward jump" in involvement after nine years of Jewish education, the combination of those years (into high school) in a day school environment would certainly effect the greatest impact on Jewish involvement and the lowest rate of intermarriage.
4. Of all the major Jewish (denominational affiliations) and socio-economic background (age, generation, gender, income, and secular education) indicators, number of years of Jewish education is the strongest factor in predicting Jewish involvement.



Summaries of Alvin I. Schiff and Mareleyn Schneider Reports on the Effects of Jewish Education

Report 1

During the last 30-35 years, there has been an increase in day school students, accompanied by a decrease in supplemental schooling (Sunday and afternoon school).

There is a general consensus that Jewish schooling correlates with reductions in intermarriage and more Jewishly active lives. Fishman and Goldstein report that Jewish education causes people to have more Jewish friends, live in Jewish neighborhoods, and give more time and money to Jewish organizations. In their report, Rimor and Katz agree but emphasize that at least nine years of schooling are necessary for such results. While Shapiro feels that the number of hours spent on Jewish schooling is not vital, Schiff and Schneider disagree, claiming that the longer one stays in a Jewish school the greater his Jewish involvement is likely to be and the less likely he is to intermarry.

Those who attended Jewish high schools on average have established Jewish homes, are more observant (Shabbat and Kashrut), and are involved more actively in the community. 89% of Jewish day schools graduates have visited Israel, as opposed to 15% of the general American Jewish population. Only 4.5% of these graduates intermarried, as opposed to over 50% in the American Jewish population as a whole. Additionally, over 80% of the graduates would object to their children intermarrying.

Report 2

Schiff divides the graduates into three categories: those completing elementary school, those completing high school, and those pursuing Jewish studies beyond high school. He concludes that "graduation from high school and beyond greatly increases Kashrut and Shabbat observance, Jewish communal activity, and objection to intermarriage of progeny"(p. 5). Parental observance in itself is not enough to support Jewish values; however, with a Jewish high school education, 75% of those with observant parents follow their parents' observance. Even with non-observant parents, 73% of high school graduates make Kiddush Friday night and 62% keep kosher in the

house. Most elementary school graduates with non-observant parents are not involved in Jewish organizations.

Schiff argues that "extensive Jewish day school education is the most important contributor to the formation of strong Jewish identities"(p. 8). Jewish agencies should provide for continuing Jewish education, and in particular they "should encourage and make possible the establishment of Jewish day high schools"(p. 8).

Report 3

For children of Orthodox backgrounds, there are tremendous gains from a high school education. The intermarriage rate decreases within the non-Orthodox community as a result of a Jewish high school education as opposed to only an elementary school one. Reform graduates' intermarriage rates drop from 50% to 15%, and for Conservative graduates the figure falls from 17% to 6%.



Selective summary of the "Power of Jewish Education,"
by Seymour Martin Lipset

Through his analysis of the data collected by the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), Lipset argues that "the longer and more intensive the Jewish training, the more likely people are to be committed to and practice Judaism," (p.57). In our increasingly pluralistic American society he notes, "The intermarriage rate will grow. Hence, while we must do what we can to reach out to those weakly committed, we must concentrate on the dedicated 'remnant'"(p.57).

I. Introduction

"These findings present us with a classic chicken and egg problem in trying to explain the role of religious education" To what extent do family religious commitments, which themselves might be a reflection of prior education, influence the strong linkages between Jewish education, Jewish identification and community involvement? Can schooling overcome the lack of commitment of those reared in weakly identified families...Still the evidence is congruent with the hypothesis that Jewish education make a difference," (9).

II: Determinants of Jewish Education for Adult Respondents

findings pertinent to our goal of establishing a Jewish High School:

"...there has been an increase...those attending the most intensive form, day schools" (p.13).

"Clearly, day school attendance falls off steadily with length of generational stay in America, while Sunday school attendance increases.

These findings clearly imply that assimilation pressures are operative. The interplay between generational background and type of training reinforces the assumption that Americanization works against Jewish education," (p.14).

"Thirty-nine percent of the respondents with intramarried parents continued their studies for six or more years, compared to nine percent of those with intermarried ones," (14).

"Twenty percent of today's Orthodox report having gone to a full-time day school as compared to less than seven percent of the Conservatives, and only three percent of the Reform," (15).

"The more the indicators reflect Americanization, the less chances of having been trained for Jewish continuity," (16).

III: *The Consequences of Formal Jewish Education*

"Perhaps the best single indicator of commitment to continuity and the community in the survey is the question "How important is being a Jew for you?" Only 22 percent of those who had never been exposed to any form of Jewish education replied "very important." The same answer was given by 75 percent to those who had been to day school...." (17).

"Close to half of American Jews, 48 percent, report that they observe the most serious religious personal obligation, fasting on Yom Kippur. Willingness to do so correlates strongly with type and duration of religious training..." (17).

"...the more intense the educational experience of respondents, the higher their score on ritual observance," (18).

"Close to half, 44 percent, of those with more than 15 years of study are in households which observe all four rituals [rituals asked about in the NJPS study to determine the degree of observance of the interviewees], while, as noted earlier, two-thirds, 67 percent, of the interviewees without any religious training are not involved in any," (18).

"The more Jewish education one has, the less likely one is to marry a non-Jew. Over three-quarters, 78 percent, of those who attended a day school married birth-right Jews, a figure which falls off to two-thirds for both private tutorees (65 percent) and ...etc. (20).

The growth in the intermarriage rate reflects current attitudes dominant among adult Jews. The population survey inquired: "Hypothetically, if your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person, would you: strongly support, support, accept, or be neutral, oppose, or strongly oppose the marriage?" Only 16 percent

would oppose...More religious education only marginally reduces the willingness to accept or support intermarriage, except for those with more than 15 years of schooling.....etc.," (20).

"...the longer, and more intense the Jewish educational experience, the more people are interested in living among their co-religionists, presumable, at least in part, to facilitate the upbringing and marriage of their children with other Jews," (21).

"A good majority--63 percent--of those who attended day school report themselves extremely or very attached to Israel.....etc.," (22).

"Over four fifths--83 percent--of the respondents in households that contribute to Jewish charities, have received formal Jewish schooling," (24).

"...willingness to belong, and volunteer services, to Jewish organizations correlates strongly with educational history," (24).

"...the propensity to continue with Jewish education into adulthood is closely linked to previous attendance and type of former schooling...etc.," (24).

"The longer Jews have been exposed to Jewish education, the greater their commitment to the community, to some form of the religion, and to Israel. The relationships among type of school attended, attitudes and behavior reiterate this conclusion again and again...those who went to day school were much more likely to give the most intensely Jewish response than respondents who attended part-time/afternoon school...Clearly the better (whatever that means) and more intense their training, the more likely Jews are to continue in the faith and community," (26).

IV: Multivariate Analysis of the Adult Respondents

"...denomination raised played a significant role in explaining both duration and type of formal Jewish education received...Most important however was the extent to which respondents came from fully Jewish families..." (29).

V. The education of the Young

"...Two thirds of all those school age--66 percent--were not enrolled in 1990. And among those past the Bar/Bat Mitzvah age, around three quarters are outside the Jewish educational system..." (35).

"Family educational background, denomination, Jewish identity, and intermarriage, are strongly associated with whether children secure or will be receiving Jewish religious training, (35).

"...when both parents have had some formal Jewish education, 58 percent have enrolled or expect to enroll at least one child," (36).

"The more years a respondent has spent in Jewish institutions, the more likely it is that s/h will enroll his/her children in school. A less powerful relationship exists between type of education a parent had and that which his/her children are securing..." (37).

"The more the parents feel the importance of being a Jew, the more likely the children are to be counted in the ranks of those studying Judaism at present, or are expected to be when they reach school age," (40).

"A consistent pattern emerges when parents are differentiated by whether they have had formal Jewish education or not...Over 90 percent of the non-attendees have one or both parents who did not receive a religious education," (44).

"The findings reported point out both the weakness and power of Jewish education. The power is reflected in the finding that those who have received Jewish training are disposed to transmit their heritage through formally educating their children...." (p.46).

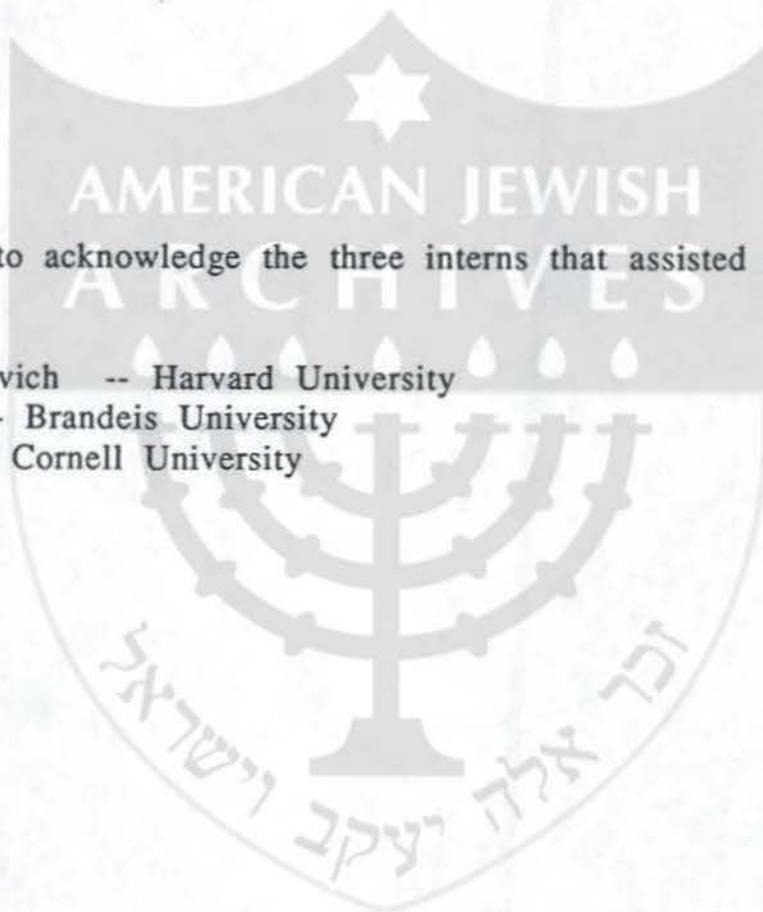
VI. Multivariate Analysis of youth respondents

"Children of Jews with formal religious training are much more likely to be enrolled in some type of training themselves,' (48).

"It may be hypothesized and perhaps even assumed, therefore, that a major source of the extremely high rate of intermarriage is the pattern of attendance by Jews at colleges and universities. Education makes for higher income and status, more culture, and greater

influence, but is also associated with lesser involvement in the Jewish community..." (52).





We would like to acknowledge the three interns that assisted us over the summer.

Gregory Bunimovich -- Harvard University

Dena Glasgow -- Brandeis University

Aliza Phillips -- Cornell University

New Jewish High School in works

By Michael Gelbwasser
Advocate Staff

The outgoing chairman of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston is spearheading efforts to open a new, unaffiliated community Jewish day high school in September 1997, possibly at Brandeis University.

Michael Bohnen, a past president of the Solomon Schechter Day School and the chairman of the new school's board of directors, said last week that Schechter would be "a primary feeder school" for the new school. He said the proposed institution would target a diverse student population, unlike many Jewish high schools.

An informational meeting about the proposed high school is scheduled Aug. 24 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the board room of the Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center, 333 Nahant St., Newton.

Massachusetts already has two Orthodox Jewish day high schools: Maimonides School and the New England Hebrew Academy, both in Brookline. Schechter is a Conservative institution.

This is the third new school to organize in recent months. The Jewish Community Day School, a non-denominational private day school based in Newton, and Bais Yaakov, a female-only high school, are both scheduled to begin classes this fall.

"The idea's been around for some time," Bohnen said of the new school. "The Schechter School, some years ago, did some feasibility studies."

Bohnen viewed the new school as an "option" for students desiring a "first-rate college prep school" with a "very strong Jewish experience."

The board hopes to hire a headmaster before year's end. Bohnen said the headmaster will hire the teachers and work on the curriculum. The school's potential deal with Brandeis may include access to the university's facilities. The board is considering requiring students to spend a semester in Israel during either the junior or senior year.

"We think that colleges will be impressed with the training that the students will get at this school," Bohnen said. "Our expectations are that our graduates will go to the finest colleges in the country."

Religious education will include instruction in Jewish history and Judaic studies. Bohnen said the school will observe Shabbat, kashrut, and all Jewish holidays, and that the school will give students a "direct connection" to their heritage.

"For the past couple of generations," Bohnen said, "we've been able to get by on nostalgia and grandparents."

School officials believe the demand for such a high school extends as far away as Central Massachusetts. Shoshanah Zaritt of Solomon Schechter Day School in Worcester said Jewish day school enrollment figures are "solid and increasing. Those families that are involved in Jewish day schools are asking, 'What happens next?'"

Zaritt is the new high school's vice president of institutional development.

Rabbi Joshua Elkin, director of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston, said 150 students will enter the sixth or seventh grades this fall at the potential feeder schools for the new high school. That figure, he said, is "double" the number from "a few years ago." Elkin is part of the "exploratory group" planning the new school.

"The broader Jewish community is beginning to pay serious attention to the fact that the high school years are crucial in the formation of adult identity and adult commitment," said Elkin.

Dr. Daniel Margolis, executive director of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston, agreed that demographic data "very, very clearly" shows more interest in Jewish education. He believes that "a number of families" would have "explored very, very seriously" an "option to the Maimonides High School if there were one available."

"Maimonides has set a very



"We think that colleges will be impressed with the training that the students will get at this school. Our expectations are that our graduates will go to the finest colleges in the country."

—Michael Bohnen

high standard," Margolis said, "and I think anything less than that will not be received well."

Zaritt said she sends her son, Jesse, to a high school in Natick. She said parents will gladly send their children, especially high schoolers, to quality, non-local schools.

"It's very reachable for all of the feeder schools," Zaritt said of Brandeis.

Bohnen projected start-up costs at "several million dollars." CJP has given the New Jewish High School, Inc., the high school's corporation, a \$6,000 planning grant. Bohnen said the corporation would seek funds from the community. Tuition, he said, would be "comparable to a private school."

"Tuition never pays the full cost of this type of program," Bohnen said.

Michal Regunberg, Brandeis' vice president of public affairs, said talks about the new school's being located on the Brandeis campus began a few months ago and are "ongoing." She described the discussions as "very preliminary."

Regunberg said space would likely be "the chief deciding factor." Brandeis' freshman enrollment rose sharply last year, and that will affect access to facilities. But Regunberg said school officials want to be as "helpful" to local Jewish organizations, including the new high school, as possible.

בית מדרש צוריאל
The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School
Upper School

Philosophy

The Upper School of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School of Greater Washington, known in Hebrew as *Beit Midrash Tsurial*, is an independent, community, coeducational, college preparatory school dedicated to creating an environment in which students grow intellectually, emotionally, ethically, and spiritually. The school, in partnership with home and community, strives to provide students with a coherent view of the world based upon Jewish teachings and democratic values. We hope to teach our students:

- to become life-long learners so that as they grow in knowledge they can understand the complexity of their lives in our complicated world;
- to find reverence for the Divine and Holy as they learn to create and cherish sacred moments and spaces as they grow in appreciation for that which is sublime in humanity and that which is awesome in nature;
- to form an inextricable bond with the Jewish people and the land of Israel, to identify with the memories of their ancestors, to discern wisdom and spiritual guidance in Judaism and to incorporate its teachings and observances into their lives, and to find beauty and self-expression in the Hebrew language;
- to nurture a love of humanity through the study of civilization — its cultural, literary, linguistic, scientific, and technological advancements which have been achieved across time and in a variety of cultures;
- to cultivate critical minds, caring souls, and healthy bodies as we challenge their interpretative, creative, intuitive, emotional, logical, spiritual, communicative, and kinesthetic faculties;
- to be passionate about making the world a better place by bringing about improvements in social policy, science, ethics, religion, and the arts.

Our philosophy is reflected in our interpretation of the following Jewish precepts:

ללמוד תורה לשמה
Learn Torah for its
own sake

To foster a love of "learning for the sake of learning" through a comprehensive academic program which provides opportunities for independent thinking and creative expression, and encourages the free exchange of ideas and a spirit of inquiry.

קדשים תהיו
You shall be holy

To allow for the dwelling of the Divine Presence in the world by sanctifying life through the imitation of the ways of God in word and deed.

לתקן עולם
Repair the world

To accept the individual and communal mandate for improving the world and the lives of its inhabitants.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך
Love your neighbor
as yourself

To create a caring community based upon *derekh erez* (mutual respect) in which members are responsible for others and the community.

בל תשחית
Do not destroy

To foster an appreciation of the environment and a sense of responsibility for preserving God's world.

ושנתם לבניך
Teach your children

To promote understanding of Jewish values and to accept the challenge to perpetuate those values and to transmit the joy of Jewish living to future generations.

The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, which is not affiliated with any of the major religious denominations, recognizes the religious, economic, and cultural diversity of the Jewish community and therefore welcomes students from various backgrounds with a common commitment to Jewish study and living. Each day we begin with morning *tefillot* (prayer) and our school calendar is shaped by the Shabbat and Jewish holiday cycle. We teach a Jewish pattern of life through academic and cocurricular programs and by personal example with the basic premise that differences be respected in an open and noncoercive environment. As a community institution, the school ensures that no child be denied entrance solely because of the family's economic situation and, therefore, makes every effort to provide financial assistance.

Judaism teaches that all life is sacred, each person is unique and precious, and all humanity is created in the Divine image. These teachings inform all the relationships in the school.

The teachers, counselors, staff, and administration of the school are dedicated professionals who respect one another and value each other's expertise. The organization of the institution promotes the notion that all are welcome to participate in the decision making process. Students are taught to trust the authority and guidance of the faculty, administration, and staff and they are encouraged to initiate open and honest dialogue concerning academic and personal issues with them.

The staff members of the Jewish Day School strive to demonstrate fairness, honesty, humility, respect, and sensitivity. By evincing their love of knowledge and passion for teaching, teachers are models of life-long learning. Considering each child as an individual, the adults of this school take personal interest in the emotional, academic, and spiritual growth of students.

We expect our students to be sensitive to the needs of their peers, to respect individual differences, and to show kindness and empathy to their classmates. When conflicts arise, we teach students to find constructive ways to bring about resolution.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents are jointly committed to carrying out the mission of the school. Throughout the year, they maintain communication concerning students through periodic conferences and written reports and by means of telephone conversations, supplemental reports, and meetings as needed.

The school is committed to the notion of pluralism on two levels. As a school whose mission it is to serve the broad spectrum of the Jewish community, we welcome the challenge to integrate the diverse philosophies, practices, and backgrounds of our constituency into one school community. At the same time, we are keenly aware of our duty as citizens of a democratic society to participate in the public discourse, where we give voice to our concerns and opinions, and where we listen to and learn about the concerns and opinions of others. To this end, we offer our students opportunities to explore the diversity of world culture in the classroom; to meet students from various backgrounds through interscholastic academic and athletic programs and through interfaith

dialogues; and to study societal needs in coursework and become involved in the betterment of society through community service. We hope that, as responsible members of democratic societies, our students will have tolerance and respect for divergent and minority viewpoints and will be able to evaluate critically their own ideas and those of others.

The process of education at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day is built upon the understanding that students come with varied intellectual abilities and learning styles. Teachers employ a variety of pedagogic and curricular presentations, and class size is limited to allow for more individual interaction between teacher and student. For the most part, we place students in heterogeneous groupings; however, in several disciplines and on certain grade levels, we believe that some students will benefit from placement in honors sections or small classes which accommodate a greater degree of learning differences. We identify the individual needs and strengths of students through a variety of assessment approaches and we are committed to offering limited support services to students with special needs.

The faculty of the Jewish Day School constitutes a community of learners which pursues new opportunities for study, creates times for reflection, and gathers together for the sharing of ideas. The institution regards as paramount the continuing growth of the faculty: it invests in the faculty the responsibility for creating the programs for professional development in the school; and it encourages individual faculty members to seek intellectual and professional growth opportunities through conferences, classes, seminars, and independent and group study.

We recognize that learning and teaching are the most sacred and central tasks in the Jewish tradition. Within the walls of our *beit midrash* (house of study) is a learning community in which the love of Torah, service, and decency are combined to enhance the spiritual and intellectual life of all its members: students, faculty, staff, and parents.

Shimon the Just ... used to say:
On three things does the world stand—
On Torah,
on worship,
and on deeds of lovingkindness
(Mishnah Avot 1:2).

שמעון הצדיק ... היה אומר:
על שלשה דברים העולם עומד -
על התורה
ועל העבודה
ועל גמילות חסדים
(משנה אבות א' ב').

Upper School Grades 9 – 12

A Springboard to the Future

Our Upper School students would tell you that the academic program is rigorous, yet they are proud of the caliber of their course work and their ability to pursue independent and cooperative learning.

Our graduates would tell you that friends made during Upper School years have remained close after college and university well into the time of careers and families. Friendships to last a lifetime flourish in the classroom, on the athletic field, during volunteer activities and while celebrating simchat.

The typical school day begins at 8:05 with morning minyan. Because we are a community school that provides for differences in religious practices, a student may elect to attend either the Masorti (egalitarian) or Orthodox service. Additionally, on each Rosh Hodesh, a special women's minyan is held. Occasionally area rabbis and cantors are present at the minyan to add a special dimension to the daily service.

Each grade level has a specific syllabus with time for electives. The Upper School offers a broad curriculum of academic studies in Art, Bible, Business, English, Hebrew, History, Jewish History, Mathematics and Computers, Photography, Physical Education, Rabbinics, Romance Languages, and Science.



JEWISH ARCHIVES

Jewish tradition teaches that "all of Israel is responsible for one another." Students in 9th through 12th grade are required to complete eighty hours in our Community Service Program. The required service may be fulfilled at any non-profit organization. Our students show an active concern for the world around them and are able to help make our community a better place.

The grade level Shabbaton is an important co-curricular event for grades 9 through 12. Each grade plans its own retreat program under faculty guidance, including minyan, sports, social activities, and discussion groups. The Shabbaton affords faculty and students an exceptional opportunity to mingle outside of a classroom setting.





Our athletic department is big enough to offer a full range of intramural and varsity sports, yet we're small enough to give everyone a chance to shine. CES/JDS boasts winning seasons in varsity and junior varsity sports as members of the Potomac Valley Athletic Conference. In addition to organized sports we have an acclaimed "fitness for life" program, and marvelous new athletic facilities.

Virtually all of our graduates go on to attend universities and colleges throughout the country. We pride ourselves on making the transition from high school to higher learning a smooth experience. In the 9th grade each student is assigned a counselor through graduation. Counselors grow close to their students and are better equipped to advise and guide them based on individual needs and goals.

The Upper School does not ascribe academic ranking to students but rather seeks to encourage each student to do the very best. In this spirit, certain awards are presented to seniors during the Siyum, or closing ceremony, a few days prior to graduation. Departmental awards are given to students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement in the various disciplines taught in the Upper School. Other awards are also presented to seniors at the Siyum for achievement or personal growth in other areas.

Few decisions are as important as the selection and retention of quality educators. The Upper School faculty is composed of individuals who consider JDS as a commitment to educate energetic adolescents, with all the frustration and joy that accompany that mission. Two-thirds of the Upper School faculty hold advanced degrees, and the majority have taught at JDS for 10 years or more.

The "Ultimate Field Trip" is the culminating experience in the Upper School. Love of Israel — its land, its people, its history — is an integral part of students' daily lives from the minute they step foot in JDS. In February, immediately following graduation, students spend 4 months exploring the length and breadth of Israel, working on a kibbutz or moshav, intensively studying Hebrew, and sharing in the Gadna experience.

Through seminars and hands-on experiences, the just-graduated JDS alumni acquire a knowledge and feeling for Israel and the Jewish people that cannot be duplicated in any classroom. With great anticipation, our students wait for the day when they leave for Israel, the culminating experience of what for many of them has been a twelve- or thirteen-year preparation at CES/JDS.

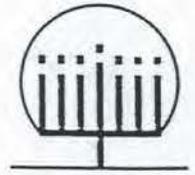
The concept of the Upper School as an institution that encourages participation is also reflected in the student council and grade level government. Leadership development is guided and promoted by grade advisors and faculty. Students work together, mindful of the opinions and views of others for the sake of the common good. The entire student body is called upon to support the various activities of each grade, be it a pizza sale or Purim carnival.



בית ספר עקיבא

Akiba Hebrew Academy

223 North Highland Avenue, Merion Station, Pennsylvania 19066
(610) 667-4070
FAX (610) 667-1046



Philosophy and Goals

Akiba Hebrew Academy, an independent Jewish community day school, was founded in 1946 by a group of public-minded Jewish citizens, lay and professional, who were deeply concerned about preparing students to assume responsibility in their community as leaders and active citizens. Uppermost in their minds was the need to create a dynamic community of educated Jews who would help insure the survival of the Jewish people and Judaism after the Holocaust. Thus, they set out to establish an intensive program of Jewish studies integrated with a comprehensive college preparatory program. It was the view of the founders that all Jewish children who academically qualify - affiliated and non-affiliated - should come together under one roof to study their common Jewish heritage, while simultaneously learning to respect all positions and the devotion and sincerity with which they are held. This objective was not intended to blur differences. Rather, it was intended to strengthen the Jewish identification of every student without compelling acceptance of one particular interpretation of what is "the" Jewish way of life.

The Jewish studies program and those activities which flow from it are the *raison d'être* of the school. Our specific goal is to develop knowledgeable Jews who will understand and be sensitive to their fellow human beings - people who are assets to any community in which they find themselves. We are convinced that the significance of the Jewish culture is most effectively grasped through the study of our classical texts, ideally in the original Hebrew language. We are committed to the centrality of Israel and Zionism to Jewish life. Because Akiba is a pluralistic institution, we preach no dogma. Rather, we expose students to the varieties of Jewish ideologies so they can make intelligent, informed choices in their own lives. We insist only on those observances which enable all of our students to participate in school life with comfort.

The fact that our school starts with the 6th grade and goes through 12th is not an accident. Because it is in these years that students raise questions and issues, our founders sought to have our young people interact with adults who can help them articulate their questions and seek intelligent answers.

From the school's inception, its educational policy has been responsive to new and significant developments in education and has tried to maintain a flexible approach to curriculum. Because we feel that freedom of expression enables individuals to thrive and excel, we strive for it in all aspects of the school. In every subject we encourage an openness in discussion, and expect the teacher to listen as well as to instruct. We assume the responsibility of enabling our students to make educated appraisals of current conditions, and to respond with

the insight gained from an historical perspective. While mastering the content of each discipline, students are challenged and urged to develop an inquiring attitude and to voice informed opinions freely in the classroom. Similarly, our teachers are encouraged to develop a personal style of educating. There is, therefore, no single Akiba teaching method or form. Nevertheless, we require all teachers and students to interact with each other in a respectful, just and caring manner. Committed to the individuality of every student, we believe that the curriculum, the activities and the staff of the school must be responsive to the emotional, social, physical, religious and intellectual differences among students. Akiba is concerned not only with the academic, but also the spiritual and physical growth of each student.

We believe that students learn through experiential as well as intellectual activities. Therefore, wherever feasible, students plan programs with teachers, work in small groups, work individually, plan numerous educational and social experiences for themselves, and generally contribute to the education in which they are involved. We attempt to create a learning environment with clearly defined standards of human relationships and behavior, and specific expectations of the students and faculty. We are committed to dealing with students in a just and open manner, trying to involve them, wherever possible, in the democratic process of making decisions which affect them and their school community. We seek to implement this commitment within the classroom and without; for example, the Student Association is an active and vital part of the school community. Moreover, our responsibility to the students extends beyond the school walls. We strongly advocate social action; our students are concerned with the needs of those less fortunate and are mindful of taking care of the planet we inhabit.

We willingly live with controversy and diversity. In fact we welcome them. We believe a comparison of opinions and practices will lead to a refinement of ideas and attitudes. This approach, in turn, will enable students to develop a view and practice of Judaism and a philosophy of life that can sustain them with pride and spiritual enrichment throughout their mature years. We hope our students will translate their Akiba experience into understanding, their understanding into commitment, and their commitment into creative and constructive action within the Jewish community and the world at large. In so doing, they will have fulfilled the aims of our founders.

Approved by the Board of Directors for the Middle States Evaluation, 1993/5753.

REPORT OF PROGRESS - AUGUST 1, 1995

THE NEW JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL*

A group of individuals from the Greater Boston, South Area and Worcester Solomon Schechter Day Schools gathered in November 1994 to explore the potential for creating a new independent school that would provide day school education from the 9th through the 12th grades. Circumstances had changed sufficiently during the ten years since the high school was last considered to warrant a new and serious exploration. Principal among these changes is the communal concern regarding continuity and the empirical evidence suggesting that day school education is an important vehicle for achieving that objective. Additionally, with demographic trends indicating increases in the teenage population at the end of this decade, and a growing number of elementary day schools in Greater Boston, we foresee an increased demand for a quality day school that will serve our students throughout the high school years. As witness to the significant growth of the day school movement across the country, including emerging high schools, we expect to hasten progress in our community by building on others' experiences.

Since our initial meeting last November, the ad hoc planning committee met to define a common mission, to evaluate the depth of support for the concept among key leaders in the community, and to identify a set of issues associated with planning a new educational institution. We outlined a six-month agenda of activities to focus our investigation. These activities included:

- drafting a mission statement;
- talking with individuals from across the country who have started new high schools;
- meeting with key communal leaders in Boston;
- exploring the possibility of space at Brandeis University; and,
- setting a timetable for planning and implementation.

This report summarizes the activities, central issues raised, and conclusions of this ad hoc committee. It also reviews the progress made since our report of May 15 and outlines the ambitious schedule for our new organizational entity that will continue to plan and implement this worthy project.

* This is a temporary name for the high school.

The Mission Statement

The first objective of the ad hoc committee was to determine if we shared a common goal. We began by drafting a mission statement, recognizing that the process of discovering, articulating, and developing a focused vision is as important as the statement itself. The core question, whether the school will be a community school or an affiliate of the Conservative movement, emerged immediately, and defined our dialogue throughout the six-month process. Will the school welcome students from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, or will the school welcome only Jewish students as defined by the Conservative movement? Why did the Charles E. Smith school, which began as a Conservative-affiliated entity, eventually become a community school? Can traditional values and practice be integrated successfully within the framework of a community school? These questions engaged us throughout, and have been a focus for continuing discussions with other members of the community.

Our consensus for a community school open to all children across denominations will set the parameters for decision-making as we make the transition to a permanent board and steering committee. Preparing for a community school will require that we embark on a thorough and systematic examination of successful community school and university-affiliated lab school models nationwide. Our continued investigation of these models will assist us as we refine the statements of our mission and religious practices and develop our curriculum plan. Sol Eisenberg, a Schechter parent and board member, and alumnus of the Ida Crown Academy in Chicago, has agreed to chair the committee on Mission, Administrative and Religious Practice and to lead our group (with Edith Goldman heading up the Religious Practice subcommittee) to a coherent resolution of these questions.

Discussions with Other High Schools

At the same time that we developed a mission statement, we reached out to individuals from other high schools, including those with experience starting up new high schools. One pivotal meeting was with Beth Ostrow from Long Island who has been credited as being a major player in establishing the newest Schechter high school, and accomplishing that feat within 18 months. She outlined steps taken to establish the school in Nassau County, alerting us to the potential problems and providing us with a realistic understanding of the energy, funds, and commitment required to create a high school. We were also able to draw on the expertise of our own members, one of whom was instrumental in establishing the South Area Schechter, and others who were involved in expanding the Worcester Schechter School. Various committee members had extended conversations with individuals in leadership positions in high schools nationwide. For example, we had discussions with Gil Graff, director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in Los Angeles, who, in the course of his duties, performed an analysis of the best Jewish day schools in the country and who was involved in the planning of a new Jewish community high school in Los Angeles. Throughout these discussions we sought to identify the key factors essential for success: a clearly defined mission; energetic, charismatic leadership; and strong rabbinic involvement. A realistic financial plan, donor support, a target population, adequate space, and superior faculty resources are all important, but the key defining decision,

according to all those with whom we talked, is to identify the individuals -- both the Head and the steering committee chair -- with the energy and vision required to orchestrate this complex and costly undertaking.

Preliminary discussions with administrators from across the country have helped us immeasurably, and we expect that their experience and expertise will continue to inform our work. It may be prudent to organize either a series of visits by knowledgeable practitioners to us, or to convene a group that can debrief us on a variety of issues. We have begun to explore several venues for convening experienced professional and lay heads of model community schools such as Akiba Academy, Hyman Brand, Charles E. Smith, as well as the university lab school models such as Hebrew University, Hunter College, and Boston Academy, in order to benefit from their experience. We have also had discussions with Peretz Rodman, a Jerusalem Fellow, who worked for five years at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, and is currently a rabbinical student at the Masorti movement's Bet Midrash in Jerusalem.

Barry Shrage and Josh Elkin have suggested organizing a series of workshops alongside the General Assembly conference here in Boston in November. The Avi Chai Foundation has expressed interest in organizing a conference of high school administrators to address issues common to all high school start ups. We have also been informed that the Wexner Foundation plans a convention to assist groups starting up new day schools. Effective and timely support for our project will require that someone consolidate these various efforts to convene a national group of high school administrators and faculty during 1996.

The Brandeis University Relationship

We approached Brandeis University to explore the possibility of launching the school on the Brandeis campus, either through a formal affiliation with the University or through an informal rental relationship with collegial ties to faculty. We believe that the Brandeis connection offers several advantages: *geography*, that is, a site ideally located to enable us to draw on feeder schools from the North, West and South; *infrastructure* (Kosher dining, science laboratories, library, computer, drama, fine arts, and athletic facilities) that would be difficult to duplicate at the outset; and, *credibility* for an academic program that would be enriched through informal and collegial association.

We met initially with Jehuda Reinharz, President, Irving Epstein, Provost, Joseph Reimer of Hornstein and selected faculty and administrators. Follow up meetings are scheduled to outline ways that Brandeis and the proposed high school might collaborate, to evaluate the compatibility of our mission with Brandeis, and to work out the particulars of a rental arrangement. Our discussions suggest that although a formal affiliation between the high school and Brandeis University would be difficult to achieve, at least for the immediate future, an informal relationship limited to renting space and utilizing the expertise of faculty, especially within the Hornstein program, is possible and desirable. Although space is scarce, Brandeis is alert to the possible financial advantage of a long-term rental agreement with the high school, as well as the opportunities for their faculty to participate in enhancing our educational and community service program.

In mid-September our steering committee's facility committee will meet again with Brandeis officials to continue our joint planning. Our side must be prepared with a specific proposal outlining space and educational needs, and reporting our financial and organizational progress. Sol Eisenberg and Bonnie Hausman participated in these discussions since the outset last spring; they have agreed to continue representing the New Jewish High School, adding expertise to the committee as needed in order to advance the Brandeis relationship.

Dialogue with Key Leaders

In addition to drafting a mission statement, talking with individuals involved in administering high schools, and thinking pragmatically about space, the planning committee met with key leaders in the Greater Boston community. We met initially with David Gordis at Hebrew College and Barry Shrage and others at CJP to inform them about our progress and timetable, and to seek guidance about ways we might work together. Several members of our committee introduced the concept to the principals at Maimonides, Rashi, Cohen Hillel, and the Solomon Schechter schools in Haverill, the South Area, Worcester and Providence.

In every instance, we received an immediate and strongly positive response. David Gordis was not only enthusiastic about the possibility of a community, or "trans-denominational" school, but offered several concrete suggestions for collaborative planning and fund raising for curriculum development. The CJP group, including Michael Bohnen, a past president of SSDS, was also extremely positive and enthusiastic; Barry Shrage shared his sentiment that it was time for a serious investment in a high school after nearly thirty years of studying it. Danny Margolis at the Bureau of Jewish Education immediately offered us the opportunity to share their offices at the Leventhal-Sidman JCC, and within a week, CJP offered us space in their new downtown location.

Recently, our request for a small initial planning grant to cover the costs of clerical and research support for the summer was recommended for approval by a CJP subcommittee. CJP's immediate and enthusiastic consideration of our proposal, considered outside the customary funding cycle, is a strong statement reflecting the desire on the part of key leaders in our community to advance our concept and to begin serious work on this worthy project.

Timetable/Plan

1. Target date. We have set September 1997 as our target date for opening the school. This date will take advantage of the potential market among the current 7th grade population who will enter high school in 1997, and, the substantial size and interest of the current 5th and 6th grades. Anecdotal information suggests that there may be substantial interest among the current population of 8th graders, and we expect to brainstorm in the next few weeks about how we might structure an educational experience that would facilitate their entry as 10th graders (combining much of the Judaica and secular programs for 9th and 10th graders) when the school opens. However, because of the multiple capital campaigns currently underway in the Boston Jewish community, and because of the myriad of tasks that must be completed prior to opening a high school, we recommend a 1997 target date to allow us 24 months to plan. While this

provides sufficient time for planning, it also takes advantage of the enthusiasm that is growing for a high school.

The pivotal factor determining our success in meeting this target date is our ability to acquire immediate and sufficient financial support for the high school. Robbie Fein, a Schechter parent and board member has agreed to serve as Treasurer and will prepare a business plan to guide our fundraising process.

2. Search for a Head. In order to meet the target date, the Head must be selected by May 1996. The Head, who will have responsibility for developing the curriculum, hiring faculty, recruiting students, and writing administrative policies, will be on site full time at the start of the 1996-97 school year to begin planning. Barbara Skydell Safran, a Schechter parent and president of the local Bureau of Jewish Education, has agreed to chair the committee that will lead the search. This committee is currently developing a proposal outlining procedures and criteria for identifying candidates and selecting the Head.

3. Community input. We anticipate continuing the process of reporting our progress and listening to members of our four feeder-school communities. We have established a dialogue with individuals at CJP, Bureau of Jewish Education, Hornstein at Brandeis, and Hebrew College who have pledged their support. Toward this end, we have planned two informational meetings, one with the headmasters and key lay leadership of the feeder schools, and another with rabbis. In response to questions about a variety of policy and religious issues, we have called upon several individuals in our community and beyond for commentary and guidance. These extended discussions throughout the summer months have guided our group's consensus to create a community school that welcomes all students who choose an intensive Judaic program within a traditional religious environment. Finally, we are planning a series of focus groups in all four feeder-school communities in late fall to present our school's program and to explore these issues with parents and students.

4. Organizational Development. We have successfully identified appropriate individuals to serve on our board of directors (see list of New Jewish High School board members). The ad hoc planning committee is dissolved; we have formed a new entity, incorporated as The New Jewish High School, and have designed a committee structure that will benefit from the expertise of individuals from a broad cross-section of institutional interests, as well as the multiple resources that exist throughout the feeder-school communities. Michael Bohnen has agreed to chair our board of directors, and we have been very successful in selecting a stellar group to work with him on the board as a steering committee.

Having formed our board, we can now begin to incorporate those who have volunteered to work with us on active committees. We expect that the committee assignments will be complete by mid-September, when we will launch a process of preparing working papers that will be the basis for our strategic planning document. This document will outline our plan for governance; finance; facility; recruitment of students, faculty, Head, volunteer leaders; administrative practices; and curriculum. Bonnie Hausman, a parent of three Schechter students, has agreed to serve as President, working closely with Michael to orchestrate this effort. Marion Gribetz, who was instrumental in the founding of the South Area Schechter school, has agreed to serve

as Vice President for Academic Program, providing guidance and clearance for the four committees involved in designing the academic program. Shoshanah Zaritt, Director of Development of the Worcester Schechter, will serve as Vice President for Institutional Development. She will serve as guide and resource for the work of the five institutional development committees.

5. A National Jewish Agenda. We believe that this new enterprise cannot depend solely on the financial, professional or voluntary support from our immediate community, but will reach beyond Greater Boston to a national audience of Jewish communal and financial leaders. Our community leaders have offered their personal endorsement of this broad reach because our goals are embedded in the context of a larger, national Jewish agenda.



New Jewish High School

Thank you for joining us at this informational meeting about the high school. You can be of great service by filling out this form. All information will be kept confidential. Please let us know if you prefer to be called.

Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Would you be interested in participating as a committee member on this project? _____

If yes, which committee would you like to join? _____

Who in your community would be interested in becoming a committee member on this project? _____

Who in your community would be interested in sending their children to this school? _____

Who in your community could be a potential donor to this project? _____

Comments: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Rabbi Joshua Elkin

Shoshanah Zaritt

1. Name - Decide

- a) mission statement The..... Academy
- b) letter - The New Jewish High School

2. Location - Brandeis - N.G.

- a) lose your identity
- b) tying your image & fate to Brandeis
- c) ~~at~~ competing for services & facilities -
athletic, extra-curricula, etc.
- d) LOOK FOR A LARGE SITE - 100 acres

3. Mission Statement

- a) comments (send copy of letter
) write covering the questionnaire)

4. Size of student body

DRAFT OF JULY, 1995

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY THE ACADEMY

TheAcademy is a Jewish coeducational high school that integrates intensive Jewish studies with a rigorous college preparatory program. Our goal is to inspire students to reach the highest standards of citizenship, scholarship, morality, and spirituality. While ~~traditional Jewish observance~~ ^{mainstream Judaism} serves as a framework for religious practice within the school, the Academy welcomes students with diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

Our purpose is to sustain our vital American ^{and Jewish} communities by offering an educational environment ~~that~~ explores the disciplines and values that have shaped both traditions while it nourishes the talents and spiritual growth of each young person.

The Judaic and General ^{Hebrew} studies emphasize classical text and interpretation; mastery of language skills as a modern form of communication and as key to textual analysis; scientific and mathematical proficiency; philosophical exploration; and, historical perspectives. Our approach to all subject matter is one of inquiry and problem-solving. Because the high school years mark a critical period of intellectual, ethical, physical, and social development, the Academy offers an array of opportunities, including athletics and the arts, for young people to explore their uniqueness, affirm their authenticity and define their identity. Faculty who exemplify the personal and intellectual qualities that we value are the cornerstones of our success. The Academy's program of community service reflects our goals of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), *Tzedek* (fostering justice), and *Ahavat Yisrael* (love of Israel).

Graduates of the Academy are knowledgeable about their dual heritage; appreciate critical scholarship; and, are committed to leading a Jewishly-informed life. By adhering to the tenets *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, that all Jews are responsible for each other, Academy graduates will contribute to strengthening American society and Jewish community.

MAJOR 17

Separate the Judaic + General curricula

2

list other extracurriculars

BONNIE HAUSMAN

August 7, 1995

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

(via facsimile: 212-751-3739)

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

I am contacting you at the suggestion of Neal Farber, a Wexner fellow, who shared with us your March 8 letter to alumni in which you outlined your vision of a model Jewish high school with a "cross-continental" network. Your interest in creating a residential school has also been brought to my attention by several of the Wexner fellows in our community, especially Barbara Skydell Safran and Geoffrey Lewis.

You may already be aware that a group of individuals from the Greater Boston, South Area and Worcester Solomon Schechter Day Schools established an ad hoc planning committee last November to explore the potential for creating a new independent school that would provide day school education from the 9th through the 12th grades. Since our initial meeting, we drafted a mission statement (enclosed); initiated discussions with officials at Brandeis University to explore siting the school and the use of various facilities on campus; talked with veterans of high school start-ups across the country; established a dialogue with key communal leaders; and, planned a series of informational meetings with the community's feeder elementary schools and rabbis. Most importantly, our committee received enthusiastic endorsement for this project across all denominations and geographic centers, ranging from the Providence and South Area Schechters in the south, the Cohen-Hillel Academy on Boston's north shore, to the Worcester Schechter in the west, and, finally, in the Greater Boston Area the Schechter School of Greater Boston and the Rashi School. *Maimonides School?*

We have been so encouraged by the response to our vision that we have decided to proceed aggressively with planning for a community school. Toward this end, we have already incorporated a new entity to establish the school. We are extremely fortunate that Michael Bohnen, Chairman of our Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) and former President of Solomon Schechter of Greater Boston, has agreed to serve as chairman of our board, and that an extraordinary group of individuals have volunteered their extensive professional expertise to move this project forward. In addition, we recently received the enthusiastic endorsement of our federation which has recommended approval of our proposal for an initial planning grant. CJP also has provided our three summer interns with temporary space to begin our planning

good list
does this
include top
givers?

must have
loose by-laws
e. easy to
amend

process. We have sought out advice from leaders in Jewish education from all over the country and in Israel, and we will continue to tap into and expand this network as a source of support and advice. Given our target for opening the school in September, 1997, we must meet an aggressive timetable for planning and implementation. We are now poised to begin the serious work of continuing our strategic planning and of identifying those who will underwrite this ambitious effort.

Because the vision you have outlined appears consistent with our objectives, we, frankly, hope to engage you in this project. Although our immediate objective is to respond to the need for *day* school education for Jewish families in Greater Boston, we expect to develop our international network by offering a junior year *residential* component that will attract students from all over the world. We also hope to develop a fifth year *residential* program drawing from students throughout the U.S. (and, perhaps, beyond) in which students will combine educational work with communal service in both in Greater Boston area and Israel. Yehuda Reinharz has aptly described this proposed endeavor as a "two peak experience, academically and Judaically."

We believe that Boston is an ideal location to launch a national model community school. Its proximity to Brandeis and the availability of professional educators in greater Boston provides us with a critical mass of Jewish educators who would be excited to become full-time or part-time employees of the school. Boston also has a large number of public and private secondary schools that could be tapped for part-time educators in specialty disciplines. And, finally, the richness and variety of our larger academic community offers a special appeal that will assist our faculty (and fifth-year student) recruitment efforts.

A few of us have already had the benefit of conversation with Michael Paley who will, hopefully, continue to provide support and guidance to this project. Michael Bohnen and I would appreciate the opportunity to review our progress with you, as well, and to explore how we might work together. I have enclosed for your review a current report of our committee's progress. In the next few days, one of us will be calling your office to inquire about your availability to talk, or perhaps meet with you in New York; meanwhile, if you would like to reach either of us, please feel free to do so. Michael can be reached at (617) 439-2285, and I can be reached at (617) 965-0098. We look forward to talking with you about this exciting and worthwhile venture.

Sincerely,

 Bonnie Hausman
 President, The New Jewish High School

encl: Report of Progress - August 1995
 Mission Statement

cc: Michael Paley
 Neal Farber

ultimate total size?
 how are you beginning - full grading or some 9 and 10?
 how?

good

Set date to meet.



REPORT OF PROGRESS - AUGUST 1, 1995

THE NEW JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL*

A group of individuals from the Greater Boston, South Area and Worcester Solomon Schechter Day Schools gathered in November 1994 to explore the potential for creating a new independent school that would provide day school education from the 9th through the 12th grades. Circumstances had changed sufficiently during the ten years since the high school was last considered to warrant a new and serious exploration. Principal among these changes is the communal concern regarding continuity and the empirical evidence suggesting that day school education is an important vehicle for achieving that objective. Additionally, with demographic trends indicating increases in the teenage population at the end of this decade, and a growing number of elementary day schools in Greater Boston, we foresee an increased demand for a quality day school that will serve our students throughout the high school years. As witness to the significant growth of the day school movement across the country, including emerging high schools, we expect to hasten progress in our community by building on others' experiences.

Since our initial meeting last November, the ad hoc planning committee met to define a common mission, to evaluate the depth of support for the concept among key leaders in the community, and to identify a set of issues associated with planning a new educational institution. We outlined a six-month agenda of activities to focus our investigation. These activities included:

- drafting a mission statement; *pretty good, but could be improved*
- talking with individuals from across the country who have started new high schools; *not too crucial, all experiences are unique & not much can be learned*
- meeting with key communal leaders in Boston; *very important.*
- exploring the possibility of space at Brandeis University; and, *NG. - look for big plot of land.*
- setting a timetable for planning and implementation. *DEFINITION of SIZE is CRUCIAL*

This report summarizes the activities, central issues raised, and conclusions of this ad hoc committee. It also reviews the progress made since our report of May 15 and outlines the ambitious schedule for our new organizational entity that will continue to plan and implement this worthy project.

* This is a temporary name for the high school. *— NG. - think of Phillips Andover or Exeter (place name + individual) as*

Hebrew name (Maimonides) Rashi or Israeli name (

The Mission Statement

The first objective of the ad hoc committee was to determine if we shared a common goal. We began by drafting a mission statement, recognizing that the process of discovering, articulating, and developing a focused vision is as important as the statement itself. The core question, whether the school will be a community school or an affiliate of the Conservative movement, emerged immediately, and defined our dialogue throughout the six-month process. Will the school welcome students from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, or will the school welcome only Jewish students as defined by the Conservative movement? Why did the Charles E. Smith school, which began as a Conservative-affiliated entity, eventually become a community school? Can traditional values and practice be integrated successfully within the framework of a community school? These questions engaged us throughout, and have been a focus for continuing discussions with other members of the community.

Certainly!

Our consensus for a community school open to all children across denominations will set the parameters for decision-making as we make the transition to a permanent board and steering committee. Preparing for a community school will require that we embark on a thorough and systematic examination of successful community school and university-affiliated lab school models nationwide. Our continued investigation of these models will assist us as we refine the statements of our mission and religious practices and develop our curriculum plan. Sol Eisenberg, a Schechter parent and board member, and alumnus of the Ida Crown Academy in Chicago, has agreed to chair the committee on Mission, Administrative and Religious Practice and to lead our group (with Edith Goldman heading up the Religious Practice subcommittee) to a coherent resolution of these questions.

SMALL

this is ok,
but not on
univ. campus

Discussions with Other High Schools

At the same time that we developed a mission statement, we reached out to individuals from other high schools, including those with experience starting up new high schools. One pivotal meeting was with Beth Ostrow from Long Island who has been credited as being a major player in establishing the newest Schechter high school, and accomplishing that feat within 18 months. She outlined steps taken to establish the school in Nassau County, alerting us to the potential problems and providing us with a realistic understanding of the energy, funds, and commitment required to create a high school. We were also able to draw on the expertise of our own members, one of whom was instrumental in establishing the South Area Schechter, and others who were involved in expanding the Worcester Schechter School. Various committee members had extended conversations with individuals in leadership positions in high schools nationwide. For example, we had discussions with Gil Graff, director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in Los Angeles, who, in the course of his duties, performed an analysis of the best Jewish day schools in the country and who was involved in the planning of a new Jewish community high school in Los Angeles. Throughout these discussions we sought to identify the key factors essential for success: a clearly defined mission; energetic, charismatic leadership; and strong rabbinic involvement. A realistic financial plan, donor support, a target population,

great
combination
+
strong lay
fund-raisers

adequate space, and superior faculty resources are all important, but the key defining decision, according to all those with whom we talked, is to identify the individuals -- both the Head and the steering committee chair -- with the energy and vision required to orchestrate this complex and costly undertaking.

hire him/her now.

Preliminary discussions with administrators from across the country have helped us immeasurably, and we expect that their experience and expertise will continue to inform our work. It may be prudent to organize either a series of visits by knowledgeable practitioners to us, or to convene a group that can debrief us on a variety of issues. We have begun to explore several venues for convening experienced professional and lay heads of model community schools such as Akiba Academy, Hyman Brand, Charles E. Smith, as well as the university lab school models such as Hebrew University, Hunter College, and Boston Academy, in order to benefit from their experience. We have also had discussions with Peretz Rodman, a Jerusalem Fellow, who worked for five years at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, and is currently a rabbinical student at the Masorti movement's Bet Midrash in Jerusalem.

Barry Shrage and Josh Elkin have suggested organizing a series of workshops alongside the General Assembly conference here in Boston in November. The Avi Chai Foundation has expressed interest in organizing a conference of high school administrators to address issues common to all high school start ups. We have also been informed that the Wexner Foundation plans a convention to assist groups starting up new day schools. Effective and timely support for our project will require that someone consolidate these various efforts to convene a national group of high school administrators and faculty during 1996.

pretty useless
maybe
?
more talk

none of this is worth the investment of energy required.

The Brandeis University Relationship

We approached Brandeis University to explore the possibility of launching the school on the Brandeis campus, either through a formal affiliation with the University or through an informal rental relationship with collegial ties to faculty. We believe that the Brandeis connection offers several advantages: *geography*, that is, a site ideally located to enable us to draw on feeder schools from the North, West and South; *infrastructure* (Kosher dining, science laboratories, library, computer, drama, fine arts, and athletic facilities) that would be difficult to duplicate at the outset; and, *credibility* for an academic program that would be enriched through informal and collegial association.

We met initially with Jehuda Reinharz, President, Irving Epstein, Provost, Joseph Reimer of Hornstein and selected faculty and administrators. Follow up meetings are scheduled to outline ways that Brandeis and the proposed high school might collaborate, to evaluate the compatibility of our mission with Brandeis, and to work out the particulars of a rental arrangement. Our discussions suggest that although a formal affiliation between the high school and Brandeis University would be difficult to achieve, at least for the immediate future, an informal relationship limited to renting space and utilizing the expertise of faculty, especially within the Hornstein program, is possible and desirable. Although space is scarce, Brandeis is alert to the possible financial advantage of a long-term rental agreement with the high school,

You will be constantly cramped.

You will be an unhappy tenant

as well as the opportunities for their faculty to participate in enhancing our educational and community service program.

In mid-September our steering committee's facility committee will meet again with Brandeis officials to continue our joint planning. Our side must be prepared with a specific proposal outlining space and educational needs, and reporting our financial and organizational progress. Sol Eisenberg and Bonnie Hausman participated in these discussions since the outset last spring; they have agreed to continue representing the New Jewish High School, adding expertise to the committee as needed in order to advance the Brandeis relationship.

postpone
look for
another
site

Dialogue with Key Leaders

In addition to drafting a mission statement, talking with individuals involved in administering high schools, and thinking pragmatically about space, the planning committee met with key leaders in the Greater Boston community. We met initially with David Gordis at Hebrew College and Barry Shrage and others at CJP to inform them about our progress and timetable, and to seek guidance about ways we might work together. Several members of our committee introduced the concept to the principals at Maimonides, Rashi, Cohen Hillel, and the Solomon Schechter schools in Haverill, the South Area, Worcester and Providence.

In every instance, we received an immediate and strongly positive response. David Gordis was not only enthusiastic about the possibility of a community, or "trans-denominational" school, but offered several concrete suggestions for collaborative planning and fund raising for curriculum development. The CJP group, including Michael Bohnen, a past president of SSDS, was also extremely positive and enthusiastic; Barry Shrage shared his sentiment that it was time for a serious investment in a high school after nearly thirty years of studying it. Danny Margolis at the Bureau of Jewish Education immediately offered us the opportunity to share their offices at the Leventhal-Sidman JCC, and within a week, CJP offered us space in their new downtown location.

Recently, our request for a small initial planning grant to cover the costs of clerical and research support for the summer was recommended for approval by a CJP subcommittee. CJP's immediate and enthusiastic consideration of our proposal, considered outside the customary funding cycle, is a strong statement reflecting the desire on the part of key leaders in our community to advance our concept and to begin serious work on this worthy project.

Timetable/Plan

1. Target date. We have set September 1997 as our target date for opening the school. This date will take advantage of the potential market among the current 7th grade population who will enter high school in 1997, and, the substantial size and interest of the current 5th and 6th grades. Anecdotal information suggests that there may be substantial interest among the current population of 8th graders, and we expect to brainstorm in the next few weeks about how we might structure an educational experience that would facilitate their entry as 10th graders

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unclear
whom are
you admitting
in Sept. 97?

Some 9th and
Some 10th graders

(combining much of the Judaica and secular programs for 9th and 10th graders) when the school opens. However, because of the multiple capital campaigns currently underway in the Boston Jewish community, and because of the myriad of tasks that must be completed prior to opening a high school, we recommend a 1997 target date to allow us 24 months to plan. While this provides sufficient time for planning, it also takes advantage of the enthusiasm that is growing for a high school.

The pivotal factor determining our success in meeting this target date is our ability to acquire immediate and sufficient financial support for the high school. Robbie Fein, a Schechter parent and board member has agreed to serve as Treasurer and will prepare a business plan to guide our fundraising process.

YOU NEED LAND, BUILDINGS, etc. NOT A BUSINESS PLAN

2. Search for a Head. In order to meet the target date, the Head must be selected by ~~May~~ 1996. The Head, who will have responsibility for developing the curriculum, hiring faculty, recruiting students, and writing administrative policies, will be on site full time at the start of the 1996-97 school year to begin planning. Barbara Skydell Safran, a Schechter parent and president of the local Bureau of Jewish Education, has agreed to chair the committee that will lead the search. This committee is currently developing a proposal outlining procedures and criteria for identifying candidates and selecting the Head.

NOW

THIS SOUNDS CUMBERSOME. ASK

3. Community input. We anticipate continuing the process of reporting our progress and listening to members of our four feeder-school communities. We have established a dialogue with individuals at CJP, Bureau of Jewish Education, Hornstein at Brandeis, and Hebrew College who have pledged their support. Toward this end, we have planned two informational meetings, one with the headmasters and key lay leadership of the feeder schools, and another with rabbis. In response to questions about a variety of policy and religious issues, we have called upon several individuals in our community and beyond for commentary and guidance. These extended discussions throughout the summer months have guided our group's consensus to create a community school that welcomes all students who choose an intensive Judaic program within a traditional religious environment. Finally, we are planning a series of focus groups in all four feeder-school communities in late fall to present our school's program and to explore these issues with parents and students.

RIEMER for suggestions.

or better yet, ask him to take the job. NOW

good

be careful of this word. AVOID IT. FIND CIRCUMLOCUTIONS.

4. Organizational Development. We have successfully identified appropriate individuals to serve on our board of directors (see list of New Jewish High School board members). The ad hoc planning committee is dissolved; we have formed a new entity, incorporated as The New Jewish High School, and have designed a committee structure that will benefit the expertise of individuals from a broad cross-section of institutional interests, as well as the multiple resources that exist throughout the feeder-school communities. Michael Bohnen has agreed to chair our board of directors, and we have been very successful in selecting a stellar group to work with him on the board as a steering committee.

Having formed our board, we can now begin to incorporate those who have volunteered to work with us on active committees. We expect that the committee assignments will be complete by mid-September, when we will launch a process of preparing working papers that will be the

Student rules
rewards
+
punishments

basis for our strategic planning document. This document will outline our plan for governance; finance; facility; recruitment of students, faculty, Head, volunteer leaders; administrative practices; and curriculum. Bonnie Hausman, a parent of three Schechter students, has agreed to serve as President, working closely with Michael to orchestrate this effort. Marion Gribetz, who was instrumental in the founding of the South Area Schechter school, has agreed to serve as Vice President for Academic Program, providing guidance and clearance for the four committees involved in designing the academic program. Shoshanah Zaritt, Director of Development of the Worcester Schechter, will serve as Vice President for Institutional Development. She will serve as guide and resource for the work of the five institutional development committees.

5. A National Jewish Agenda. We believe that this new enterprise cannot depend solely on the financial, professional or voluntary support from our immediate community, but will reach beyond Greater Boston to a national audience of Jewish communal and financial leaders. Our community leaders have offered their personal endorsement of this broad reach because our goals are embedded in the context of a larger, national Jewish agenda.

So you must form a national committee

Small powerful financially capable



BONNIE HAUSMAN

FAX TRANSMITTAL

Date: 8/7/95

To: Rabbi H. Freedman

Company: AMERICAN JEWISH

ARCHIVES

Fax #: 212-751-3739

No. of pages (including cover sheet): _____

From: Bonnie Hausman

Phone: 617-965-0098

Comments: Re: Update of high school
planning in Boston.

+ Mission Statement draft

BONNIE HAUSMAN**FAX TRANSMITTAL****Date:** 8/7/95**To:** Rabbi H. Freedman**Company:** AMERICAN JEWISH

ARCHIVES

Fax #: 212-751-3739**No. of pages (including cover sheet):** _____**From:** Bonnie Hausman**Phone:** 617-965-0098**Comments:** Re: Update of high school
planning in Boston.

October 3, 1994

MAJOR ITEMS ON CREATING A HIGH SCHOOL

1. Marketing

- a. Linkages with all day schools, Bureau of Jewish Education, leading congregational schools (Rabbis), to accumulate lists of potential students.
- b. Make list of leading families in town with children in grades two below opening grade of your school, and start soliciting those families individually for their children.
- c. Create advisory board of prestigious people in the educational world (not only Jewish).
- d. Design attractive brochure, describing all attributes of school - i.e., sports program (intramural with other high schools, public and private); extra-curricular activities being offered; fluency in Hebrew spoken language; tenth grade program in Israel, etc.).

2. Finances

- a. Do *not* concentrate only on building costs. Create from beginning a student financial-aid program in form of an endowment fund. This should at very least equal, if not surpass, the building fund.
- b. Create a 501-C-3 non-profit tax-deductible corporation which owns and manages the school.

3. Name of School

- a. Must be universal, attractive - San Diego Academy
La Jolla Academy
King David Academy

4. Find Headmaster

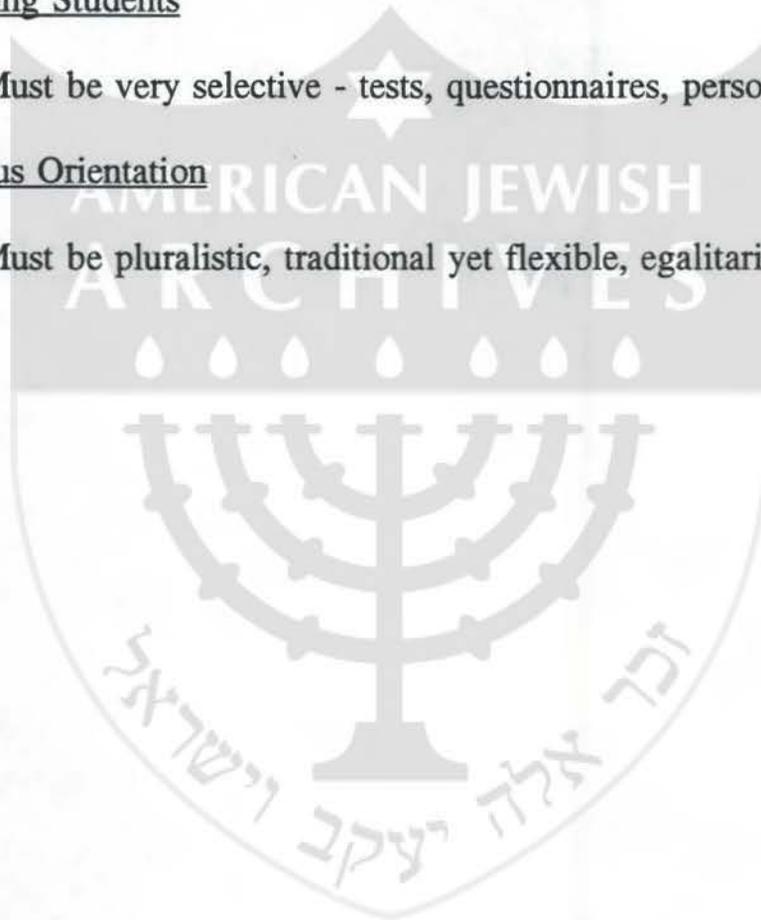
- a. Hire him immediately, years before school will open, so that he can participate in shaping curriculum, recruiting faculty, approving architectural planning, etc.

5. Recruiting Students

- a. Must be very selective - tests, questionnaires, personal interviews.

6. Religious Orientation

- a. Must be pluralistic, traditional yet flexible, egalitarian.



Rebli Daniel Lehmann
New Jewish High School
60 Turner St.
Waltham, MA 02154
617-~~7~~26-8680

1) put this on Rolodex

2) Give this paper back to me.