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COMMUNITY INITIATIVES ON PERSONNEL IN JEWISH EDUCATION

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Dealing with personnel issues demands a holistic approach: recruitment, training, retention, and profession-building are all interrelated.
2. Dealing with personnel issues demands a community-wide approach: a broad range of institutions must be mobilized and utilized.
3. Dealing with personnel issues demands the investment of additional resources: you get what you pay for.

TRANSLATING PRINCIPLES INTO PROGRAMS: TEN EXAMPLES

1. **Avocational Teacher Training Program; MetroWest, New Jersey** -- Community residents participate in a weekly seminar, developed by the local Midrasha, to prepare for teaching roles in supplementary schools. Studies include Judaica, pedagogy, and Hebrew. Trainees work in schools, under the supervision of mentor teachers. Educational directors participate as instructors and mentors. Administered by the Jewish Education Association, funded by a grant from the community foundation.
2. **College Student Intern Program; Chicago** -- College students are recruited for part-time teaching positions and participation in a special training program. Classes are given in child development, classroom management and curriculum. Students are assigned master teachers to provide ongoing assistance in the classroom. (Chicago has a master teachers program.) Students receive stipends above their teaching salary for participating. Administered by the Board of Jewish Education.
3. **Joint Commission Program for Teacher Training; Baltimore** -- Teachers take courses at the Baltimore Hebrew University, which lead to academic degrees or licensing. Tuition is paid for, and students who earn a "B" or better receive \$150 for each course completed. When a teacher reaches a new licensing level, an arrival bonus and salary supplement are provided. Funded by the Federation.

4. **LAATID (Learning and Advancement for Teaching and Individual Development); San Francisco** -- Teachers earn in-service units by participating in a variety of BJE sponsored workshops, seminars, and conferences. Teachers earning 12 units during the year receive a \$150 stipend. Schools in which more than 75% of teachers earn 12 credits receive direct grants. Funded by Federation Endowment Fund Grant.
5. **Teacher Fellowship Program; Rhode Island** -- Teachers of promise are selected to receive stipends of \$750 per year to improve their Judaica background or pedagogic skills. Most use the funds to achieve certification through taking courses at the Providence branch of the Hebrew College of Boston
6. **Day School Teacher Salary Supplementation; MetroWest, NJ** -- The Federation allocates funds directly to supplement salaries of day school teachers in the community. (This is in addition to allocations to the day schools.) Currently, \$100,000 is provided annually for this purpose.
7. **Benefits Packages for Jewish Educators; New York** -- The Fund for Jewish Education (sponsored by the UJA-Federation and Joseph Gruss, administered by the BJE) makes grants to enable full-time Jewish educators in day and supplementary schools to receive life and health insurance coverage, and participates with schools and educators in a pension plan. Over \$2,500,000 annually is expended for these purposes.
8. **Linking Day School Funding to Teacher Certification and Salaries; Miami** -- Day schools are eligible for funding by federation only if their teachers are licensed. The amount of funding which schools receive is tied directly to the salaries which their teachers are paid. Day school Funding process is administered by the Central Agency for Jewish Education.
9. **Principals Centers; New York and Chicago** -- The Boards of Jewish Education of New York and Chicago each run extensive professional development programs aimed at principals. These include regular seminars and special institutes, and utilize top-calibre academics and other resource people. Modeled on the principals centers in general education.
10. **Planning for Personnel: The Cleveland Commission on Jewish Continuity** -- The Cleveland Federation and Congregational Plenum jointly sponsored a Commission on Jewish Continuity. The Commission's Task Force on Personnel made extensive recommendations for a comprehensive program of personnel development for formal and informal Jewish education, involving the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies, the Bureau of Jewish Education, Day Schools, Congregations, and the JCC. Recommendations included: 1) a Cleveland Fellows Program to recruit and train at the Cleveland College full-time Jewish educators for the community and to fill newly created positions as family educators, retreat specialists, master teachers, and school directors; 2) an expanded in-service education package, involving the development of Personal Growth Plans for teachers leading toward degrees, licensure, or other professional advancement, and incorporating teacher and institutional stipends to encourage participation; 3) a four-year plan to increase day school teachers' salaries, with 70% of the funding to come from Federation; and 4) the development by the Bureau of Jewish Education of five full-time community teacher positions, combining jobs to create a reasonable teaching load and salary.

JEWISH EDUCATION: CRISIS AND VISION

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Imagine:

-- The Samuels family is finishing its preparations for Shabbat dinner. The Kaplans and the Grants, their regular "study partners" in the synagogue "Family Learning Experience" program, will be arriving shortly. Nine-year old Tammy is busily reviewing the worksheet on this week's Parashat Hashavuah which the family worked on together Wednesday evening after supper. Twelve-year old Brian is rehearsing the Kiddush, which he will chant this week. He also checks the notes he took on Tuesday at the community "Judaic learning center" at the JCC on the concept of "kedushah" in Judaism. The "Torah tutor" there had been a real help in suggesting some interesting questions he could ask about the different prayers and rituals that all had "KDSH" as part of their title. He hoped that his Dad's weekly class with some of the other lawyers and businessmen downtown hadn't covered this. In fact, he thought he had enough interesting material that he might be able to lead a mini-lesson at one of the monthly retreats where all of the families in the Family Learning Experience program came together. The doorbell rings and the Kaplan and Grant families come in, with Jessica proudly carrying the challot she baked at the synagogue after-school program. The whole house smells wonderful; it should be a great evening.

-- Steve Rubenstein looks up from the papers he's correcting. His 11th grade class on "Government and Politics" will be arriving any minute. Steve pulls out the material he has prepared: Today the class will be dealing with the clash between majority rule and minority rights. The excerpts from The Federalist Papers, several U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the Talmud, and two early medieval Responsa are all ready to distribute. Trying to apply them to the issues of dissent in the U.S. and Israel today should provoke a lively discussion. There are a few phrases from the Responsa which he may have to translate for the students, but otherwise they should be able to handle all of the texts fairly easily. When the new integrated, bi-lingual curriculum for social studies, literature, and machshava (that really sounded better than "philosophy") had been introduced four years ago at the Bernstein Hebrew Academy, there'd been a lot of skepticism, but Steve was a true believer. Of course, it hadn't been easy for him to really learn how to teach it well. But when the Academy recruited him (after he'd received his M.A. in political science), they'd promised that the special training program supported by the Kravitz Foundation would provide both the academic background and ongoing supervision he needed, and it had. Being part of a team with other teachers in other cities using the curriculum, and spending the whole Summer together with them in Israel, had also made a real difference. The monthly satellite teleconferences were even fun! The school was certainly pleased, since it had won two statewide awards for "curricular excellence" for the program, and enrollment in the high school was at an all-time high. "Well," he thinks, "here they come." "Boker tov," he calls out as the students file in.

-- Betsy and Shoshana are late again. "C'mon you two," Nancy shouts, "the bus is ready to leave." "Maher!" yells Rina. When the four girls are settled they begin to jabber, mostly in English, but with a little Hebrew thrown in. "It's amazing," says Betsy to Shoshana and Rina. "Three weeks ago I didn't even know you, but now it seems like I've known you all my life." "That's funny," Rina muses. "With all the time we spent on the computer sending messages back and forth to your youth group, I imagined what every one of you was like. But I was wrong, of course." The girls laugh as the bus speeds off. This trip to Israel was working out just as the group leaders had hoped. The kids were mixing well, though it was a shame the American teenagers didn't speak Hebrew better. But meeting face to face and travelling through Israel together certainly made the "twinning" project come alive. And the weeks of preparation had paid off. The Israeli teenagers were full of questions about American Jewish life which were certainly challenging the American participants. They could give as good as they got,

however, thanks to the seminar they'd all taken on "Israel and Contemporary Jewish Identity." Of course, nothing could compare to the impact of Israel itself, and the Israeli and American madrichim were all skilled at maximizing that impact. The American youngsters would have a lot to contribute when they returned to their community service assignments, and they were already looking forward to working on the program for the visit which the Israeli teenagers would be paying them during Winter break.

-- Jeff Siegel dumps his schoolbooks and grabs a handful of cookies. In two minutes he's sitting in front of his computer, with its attached videodisk player. He's only got forty-five minutes before soccer practice, but he wants to finish the "trip" they started in Rabbinics class at the day school today. The class is studying mishnayot dealing with Sukkot, and the teacher had started them looking through the material stored on the videodisk that showed how the holiday had been observed throughout the ages. Jeff was especially interested in the pictures and stories about the Sukkah itself. Now that he's on his own computer (the school made sure that all the families were able to buy or borrow one) he quickly finds the spot where they had stopped in class. He looks out the window, recalling the Sukkah he'd built with his Father last year. When they put up this year's Sukkah next Sunday, he would have lots of "improvements" to suggest. Even though he was far from the hardest working student in the class, he had to admit that the new "hypermedia" system almost made studying fun. This disk on the holidays had so much information, he could never explore it all: There were the passages from the Bible, Midrash, Talmud, and other rabbinic writings, including commentaries, of course; there were pictures of all sorts (even cartoons); there were stories, games, quizzes -- and the best thing was that he could control it all! Or maybe it was controlling him? Last night he'd wanted to review some of the laws of the lulav and etrog for the test on Friday, and before he knew it, he was looking at pictures of beautiful etrog holders from different countries where Jews had lived. It hadn't helped much in getting him ready for the test, but it was like having a museum at home. Even his big sister had been fascinated. In fact, he'd caught her showing the system to a few of her friends. Oh, oh. Time for soccer, but the computer would be there when he got home.

-- The synagogue parking lot looks almost like the High Holidays. It's the first Sunday of the month again, and that means "community day." As members of the congregation and their children crowd through the doors, they're greeted by the smell of warm bagels in the auditorium. Most of them are familiar with the routine. The different corners of the auditorium are marked with signs: the Cantor will be teaching a new tune for musaf in one; the Rabbi will be telling a Hasidic story in a second; one of the congregants is preparing the projector to show slides from his trip to Eastern Europe and Israel; in the fourth, materials are set up to make challah covers. Adults and children intermingle, picking a corner for the day's first activity. Forty minutes later the announcement is made: it's time to go to study groups. Now the participants divide up by age groups -- the children and adults have their own "classes," though they often study the same material. Today, the theme for "community day" is Tzedakah. The Hebrew school students have been studying about Tzedakah for a month, and the most recent activity of the youth group was a "mini-mission" to the various Jewish agencies supported by the Federation in the community. This morning all the study groups are examining Maimonides' Eight Degrees of Tzedakah and discussing how they apply to the practice of Tzedakah today. Finally, it's time for the community meetings. Although the younger children aren't involved, everyone age twelve or above is entitled to attend one of the meetings. Today, as usual, several of the synagogue committees will be meeting. There will also be a special meeting of the synagogue Tzedakah collective to discuss how to allocate the money it has collected this year. Having the meetings as part of the "Community Day" gives everyone a greater sense of involvement, and having young people there seems (at least according to some of the congregants) to make the discussions "a lot more Jewish." By one o'clock, as the parking lot empties again, you can see parents and children talking over what they did, while in the synagogue the "Community Day" planning committee sits down to lunch to ask, "what do we do next?"

Is this a vision of the future of American Jewish education? Perhaps, though the scenarios presented might more accurately be called fragments of a vision. Yet, these fragments, and others we might add to them, do, I believe, point toward a vision which is more than the individual fragments themselves. It is the vision of a holistic pattern and structure of lifelong Jewish learning, a seamless continuum of educational experiences which fit "naturally" into the life of the Jew and of the Jewish community. In this vision, Jewish education is not merely an instrumental means toward some other end -- e.g., "Jewish survival" -- but what Jewish tradition has always seen it to be: a self-validating goal, an intrinsically rewarding activity which constitutes the very core of Jewish living. In this vision, Jewish education takes place not only in schools, but in a myriad of places and times -- in the home, the synagogue, community centers, in Israel, alone in front of computer screens and with others at meetings and on trips.

This vision is not unfamiliar today. Yet, we must admit that we are still far from reaching it, at least in the lives of most American Jews. Jewish education is for a majority of American Jews an intermittent, uncertainly impactful, indifferently pursued avocation. It is heavily invested in, yet skeptically valued and evaluated. It is the province, by and large, of the young, and only occasionally their elders. Jewish education is by no means the abject failure it is sometimes presumed to be. Indeed, I would argue that the quality of education available to American Jews -- young people and adults -- has never been higher. Yet neither is Jewish education the shining beacon of success it might and should be given the dollars we spend on it, the creativity of the people involved in it, or our verbal professions of commitment to it.

If there is a crisis of Jewish education today, it is a crisis of unfulfilled potential. For many today do have a glimmering that Jewish education could be, should be something much more than it is. I am not among those who believe that American Jewish education stands on the brink of catastrophe. But I am very much among those who feel the frustration of the "not yet" and the "what might be." The fragments of a vision which I shared above are within reach; they are not "in heaven." The question is: how do we reach them? what will it take to transform present vision into future reality?

Three things, I believe, are required: First, there is the vision itself. It must be sufficiently clear, sufficiently broad, and sufficiently compelling that we can and will want to mobilize our energies around it. "Without vision a people perishes." Without a shared vision for Jewish education -- a vision of what we want it to be, Jewish education will remain sadly ineffectual, with islands of excellence, surrounded by a sea of uncertain achievement. Second, there must be an honest analysis of where we are and what holds us back from reaching our vision. What accounts for the variegated landscape of Jewish education today? Why do we continue to fall so far short of our potential? Finally, there is the need for a strategy of change. Even a cursory reading of the literature of American Jewish education confirms Koheleth's observation: There is nothing (or at least little) new under the sun. Both the cries for change and the elements of a vision of where to go have long been with us. How, this time, do we make sure that change actually takes place? Mah nishtana hash'a'ah hazeh mikol hash'a'ot?

Vision

①

analysis

strategy
for
change

I wish I could provide definitive answers to all these questions. I cannot. Instead, I will offer some observations, primarily about where we are in Jewish education today, in the hope that others can tie them securely to a powerful vision and a potent strategy for change.

In truth, all three of the elements which I have suggested are required -- vision, analysis, and strategy -- are interwoven, because what we are really talking about are the body, mind, and soul of contemporary American Jewry. If we can understand ourselves -- who we are, why we are what we are, where we can go -- we will have our answers. It is perhaps a truism, but worth stating clearly: Jewish education's problems in America today are not primarily problems of Jewish education; they are problems of American Jewry. In its strengths and its weaknesses, Jewish education is a reflection of Jewish society, of how American Jews define themselves and of what they want for themselves and their children. Jewish education cannot be significantly more or better than American Jews want or allow it to be. And if American Jews -- or at least an influential segment thereof -- today do want Jewish education to be more and better than it is (and I believe that many do), they will have to draw the necessary conclusions: Not Jewish education alone, but the Jewish community, must change if any bold vision of what education might be is to come to realization.

This is, I would suggest, the central issue for Jewish education today. Is there, can there be, an American Jewish community and culture in which Jewish education "makes sense"? Education cannot function in a vacuum. It requires a community and a culture to nurture and sustain it. I mean here much more than the provision of material and financial resources, though that is surely important. Education requires a community and a culture from which to draw its mandate and its goals. Who empowers our teachers to teach? Who will tell them what is important to transmit, and will guarantee that they will not be embarrassed (if they are successful) by students who conclude that what they have been taught is in fact worthless? Education requires a living community which can share with it the dual tasks of enculturation and instruction, of initiation into a group and its way of life and of transmission of the knowledge, skills, practices, and attitudes which enable one to function effectively and satisfyingly within that group.¹ Education requires a community and a culture in which to live out, to test what one has learned. Where the testing reveals a gap between the ideal and the real, then education requires a community prepared to be critiqued and transformed, to say, as God, we are told, once did, "My children have bested me!"

It should be obvious that what Jewish education most lacks today is precisely the living community in which visionary education can be meaningfully and successfully pursued. There is nothing original in this diagnosis. Yet, I am not sure that we take it seriously enough as we examine the litany of shortcomings in our educational system today. Virtually all of the oft-cited symptoms of the contemporary "crisis" of American Jewish education owe their etiology largely to this single fact. Whether it be the pervasive lack of clear educational goals, the confused state of curriculum, the absence of standards for achievement, the truncated life-span and limited hours of instruction, the persistent shortage of quality personnel, or the self-destructive fragmentation of the educational system itself -- all of the ills besetting Jewish education today can ultimately be traced back to the fact that Jewish education too often floats in a vacuum, unanchored in a community prepared to embrace it, shape it, use it, and be permeated and transformed by it in order to pursue its Jewish vision and vocation as a community.

-- Educational goals. If Jewish education is vague, unfocused, often over-ambitious in its goals, it is primarily because the assemblage of stakeholders -- parents, professionals, institutional leaders, religious authorities -- can rarely agree on what they genuinely deem important to achieve. What do we want our educational efforts to produce: a Jew who davens? one who can speak Hebrew like an Israeli? one who can read a blatt of Gemara? one who will give to the UJA? one who won't intermarry? all of the above, or none of the above? Without consensually validated goals education becomes a medium of mixed messages, and nothing gets accomplished very well.

-- Curricular confusion. Since we are not sure why we teach, it is no wonder that we are not sure what to teach. The day is short, and the work is great. Shall we try a smorgasbord approach, a little Hebrew, a little Bible, a little history, and a few religious concepts and skills? Shall we aim for mastery of one area? But which one, and how to do it in a few hours a week? What will truly serve the needs and wants of our students, of their families, of our institutions? Are those needs and wants the same?

-- Low standards. What are the expectations which the community sets for an "educated Jew"? That he or she be able to perform at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah without causing embarrassment to self, family or community. That expectation, virtually the only one ever enforced, is usually met. But with no other expectations, there is no effort to measure their achievement. Hence, Jewish education operates without standards.

-- Limited life-span and hours. Jewish education is by and large elementary education because nothing more is apparently really needed to function as a Jewish adult. Jewish education is important, but so are many other things which seem to relate far more directly to being a mature, competent, fulfilled human being. Since adults seem to get along quite well without much involvement in Jewish education, the closer we get to adulthood, the less of it we evidently need.

-- The personnel shortage. One can make a decent living as a full-time Jewish educator, but why would one want to? Educators are not community leaders; they appear rarely on podia; their advice is not sought on important issues; they work all day with children. Meanwhile, too many

educators cut themselves off from the community they serve. They are knowledgeable Jews; the community is comprised of am ha'aratzim. Best to be left alone to do one's job, free from the meddling of board members and parents. Until, one finds oneself being asked to leave.

-- Institutional fragmentation. Jewish education belongs not to the Jewish community, but to the institutions which provide it, and they can be jealous owners indeed. In a fragmented community, Jewish education cannot help being fragmented too. Countless opportunities for reinforcement, for sharing, for creating a powerful "plausibility structure," a social base, for Jewish education are lost because we, literally, cannot get our act together.

To be sure, none of these problems is attributable solely to the fraying of the thread which should tie Jewish education to the active life of a sustaining community. But the weakness of that link, and especially the inability of Jewish education to ally itself with an adult world in which education is visibly valued, is surely the achilles heel of Jewish education today. "The crisis in American Jewish education," writes Sheldon Dorph, "consists in this very loss of an educating adult Jewish community and life-style. . . . Without such an image of cultural and communal Jewish adulthood, the direction, purposes, and methods of Jewish education -- schooling or otherwise -- become unclear."² If, as Barry Chazan suggests, "there is no general conception of what a graduate of American Jewish education should know or do, beyond the sense that he/she should 'feel Jewish,'"³ that is surely in large measure because the Jewish community provides no clear, consensual model of Jewish adulthood which embraces more than this same minimum.

This is perhaps too harsh and too general an accusation. There are positive examples of Jewish living to be found outside the school's walls, and it is to Jewish education's discredit, that it has failed to take greater advantage of them. And there are sub-communities in which Jewish education is tangibly valued, and even rewarded. There are places where the ethos and worldview which Jewish education seeks to instill receive validation and support. Yet, it must also be admitted that these contexts are frequently limited, isolated, and at times unrespecting of one another.

Moreover, at least until recently, the settings where most Jews in fact engage in "Jewish living"

as it is practiced today -- the home, the synagogue, communal institutions -- have either failed to acknowledge or lacked the competencies to undertake an educative mission. Thus, Jewish education has been thrown back on its own resources, and these inevitably have proven inadequate to fulfill what must ultimately be the task of an entire community and a thriving culture. As a result, Jewish education remains a kind of stop-gap, thrown into the breach by a community uncertain of its future in order to stem the tide of assimilation, but never able to exert its full potential life-transforming, life-enriching impact.

But isn't this just what most American Jews want? Largely, yes. As Susan Shevitz has argued in analyzing why there is a perpetual personnel crisis in Jewish education,⁴ as Ron Reynolds has demonstrated in assessing the effectiveness of supplementary schools,⁵ the Jewish education we get is more or less the Jewish education we want -- unthreatening to accustomed values and lifestyles, institutionally sustaining, a benign endeavor, but one limited in its impact. Nor is this analysis applicable only to the supplementary school. How frequently are day school clients eager to see the school produce dramatic behavioral and attitudinal changes; how many parents want their child's trip to Israel to result in a commitment to aliyah? For all of the popular denigration of Jewish education (it's difficult to find Jewish adults with much nice to say about their own Hebrew school experience), surveys indicate that the vast majority of parents are pleased with the Jewish education which their children are receiving.

Does this mean that there is no hope for substantial change? The reform of Jewish education rests, we have suggested, on the transformation of Jewish society. But how else can we initiate and steer a self-conscious process of social transformation except through education itself? The limitations of Jewish education -- especially the fact that it is largely pediatric and divorced from the realities of community life -- define the very conditions which education must itself change. The community and culture which Jewish education needs in order to be effective do not yet exist; hence, Jewish education must create them. Yet, unanchored in that as-yet-non-existent community and culture, education lacks the power to be a generative force. We seem to have reached a true "Catch-22," a Gordian knot we

cannot cut through.

Perhaps, though, the ends of this knot are already beginning to unravel. For the paradox I have described -- that the transformation of Jewish education can only be effected by a Jewish community itself transformed by education -- is becoming increasingly evident to many in positions of educational and communal leadership. The diagnosis is now readily accepted, and even the desired treatment is widely agreed upon. What is required to initiate the therapeutic process is a suspension of disbelief, an act of faith, if you will. We must act as if there were a vibrant community and culture ready to support a visionary model of Jewish education. We must behave as if Jewish education were an unquestioned end-in-itself, a multi-faceted, never-ending spectrum of experiences, taking place wherever Jews are working, playing, or living. We must, in short, act as if we already were what we hope to become.

This is possible, I would suggest, because Jewish education already involves a massive suspension of disbelief for many American Jews. We will do a great deal and accept a great deal for our children. We will join synagogues in order to enroll them in Sunday school, when we are confident we have no need of a synagogue for ourselves. We will start performing rituals at home we have never done before and aren't even sure we believe in, because we think our children should experience them. We will pay hefty tuitions to send our children to day schools to learn texts we can't understand and may not care to, because we think it makes them -- and us -- better Jews. To be sure, we rarely act from unmixed motives. The reservations, hesitations, and limitations are there, but so too is the commitment, and at some level, I believe, the openness to yet further possibilities of engagement.

The American Jewish community of today is not the community of 50, 25, or even 10 years ago. It is a community with more Jewish day schools, more Jewish pre-schools, more JCCs involved in Jewish education, more young people travelling to Israel, more American-born and American-educated teachers, more Federation dollars being expended on Jewish education. Perhaps these changes have taken place because of fear -- fear of inter-marriage, fear of assimilation, fear of loss of identity. Perhaps these changes are not even effective in fighting against those things which we fear! What these changes do provide, however, is the wedge for a communal and cultural transformation which may never have been

consciously intended, but which might, with a little gentle prodding, acquire a momentum of its own.

There is a public agenda for Jewish education in America today. It is not an agenda which has emanated from a single deliberative process. Nor, given the fragmentation of Jewish education, is it an agenda which can be implemented in a comprehensive, coordinated fashion. The pieces of the agenda are not always seen or advanced as part of a larger whole. But it is an agenda which is being articulated in diverse places by diverse groups and individuals: by professional educators, by Federation study committees, by national bodies, and by local activists. (Perhaps what we are witnessing is simply the playing out of the process whereby "wisdom" becomes "conventional," in which case it should, of course, be taken with the greatest skepticism. But, it may be that this is one of those moments when ideas which have been in circulation for years seem to acquire a new "rightness," even "inevitability," and we decide, at long last, really to take them seriously.) The breadth of interest in this agenda in itself holds the promise of fashioning a "public" for Jewish education more encompassing than we have seen before. What is more, each of the elements of this agenda points beyond the Jewish education enterprise in its narrow sense. It is an agenda for community transformation, not just educational reform. It cannot be effected by educators alone -- and those who are advancing it understand this reality. Nor can it be effected solely by changing educational institutions -- and this too is understood. If this agenda can be successfully implemented over the next decade or so, then what was imagined at the beginning of this paper might well become commonplace, and far bolder, more exciting visions can emerge to fire our imaginations and aspirations.

The agenda I see being widely articulated today has five components:

1. expanding the educational canvas
2. extending the educational life-cycle
3. establishing educational accountability
4. developing new human resources
5. creating a true Jewish educational system

Expanding the Educational Canvas

Education is not the business of schools alone. Today's agenda has embraced the concept of expanding the educational canvas to include a range of settings and methods. "Formal" and "informal" education are now widely accepted as necessarily complementary elements in a total educational experience. Increasingly, the educative potential even of institutions whose primary purpose is not educational -- a Soviet Jewry committee, an old age home -- is being recognized and affirmed.

The significance of this by now commonplace effort to broaden the scope of what we mean by Jewish education and to involve more institutional actors in its delivery goes beyond the new resources being brought to bear. Though some may (not without justification) bemoan the loss of rigor implicit in defining almost any Jewish experience or activity as "Jewish education," the sacrifice will be worth it if it means that education is again seen as part of the ongoing fabric of community life. The notion that education can take place in a ball game, or at a demonstration, or during the synagogue service, or at a museum, or through a film is quite simply true, educationally and Judaically. Thus, as long as the unique contribution which the school can make is also recognized and endorsed, Jewish education has far more to gain than to fear from an agenda which calls for expanding educational opportunities and activities at times and places which have too often been bereft of educational and Judaic content.

Nor should those whose commitment is to traditional educational forms and methods fear that new settings and approaches will undermine the old. In matters of Jewish identification, the rule in recent decades has been "the more, the more," i.e., the more one is Jewishly identified and active along one dimension (e.g., in religious life), the more likely it is that one will be identified and active along other dimensions as well (e.g., in support of Israel). There is no reason to believe that the same does not hold true for Jewish education: the broader the educational canvas is stretched, the more access points are made available to the educational experience, the more likely it is that those who become involved in one (rewarding) experience will seek out others. Expanding the educational canvas can help make Jewish education again a pervasive theme of Jewish living.

Extending the Educational Life-cycle

Increasing the number of settings where Jewish education takes place will have its maximum

impact only if at the same time the range of Jews involved in educational experiences also increases. This means, above all, extending the educational life-cycle, and this too has become a primary objective on the current agenda for Jewish education. Already, there are signs of significant growth in early childhood education, and a new emphasis on educational programs for teenagers, families, and adults. The aim of this effort should be clear: to build a true "cradle to grave" continuum of educational experiences, utilizing the full range of settings and methods available to us.

The development or expansion of programs for segments of the Jewish population who are today rarely involved in Jewish education is a synergistic process. Each element can build on and reinforce the others. New options for young children can draw their parents into the educational system. Families learning can inspire adults to intensify their own studies. The model of adults who take Jewish learning seriously can give a new cachet to Jewish education programs for teenagers. Building a "cradle to grave" educational system, and recruiting substantial numbers of participants for it, is a massive undertaking requiring unprecedented combinations of educational, Judaic, and marketing expertise. But even the acceptance of this as our goal represents an enormous step beyond the too-common conception of Jewish education as a "vaccine" given to the young to protect them against the disease of "assimilationitis." As we struggle to extend the educational life-cycle, we will inevitably be transforming the institutions to which Jews of various ages are attached by drawing them into the educational process.

Establishing Educational Accountability

The American Jewish community has tended in recent years to invest Jewish education with an awesome responsibility: insuring the continuity of Jewish life. It has rarely, however, sought to hold educational institutions accountable for achieving demonstrable results in this respect. That is fortunate, since, as we have argued, what is being asked of education is (at least today) far beyond its capacity to deliver. But the concept of accountability, which is now beginning to find its way into the vocabulary of Jewish education, should by no means be discarded. Just the opposite: If a serious effort can be made to establish objectives for which educational institutions and programs will be held accountable, and to

agree on the indicators by which success or failure will be measured, such an effort will create a context in which Jewish education will have a far greater chance of achieving those objectives than it does the often vague, inchoate goals which it vainly pursues today.

The concept of accountability is important because it implies that there is a community to which one is accountable. Establishing accountability will mean finding or creating a community (more likely, communities) which is prepared to set educational objectives and to insist on their realization. For any institution, including the individual Jewish family, undertaking a process of goal-setting and accountability is both a community-building and consciousness-raising venture. Educators should welcome and encourage their clients and consumers to engage in such a process. It can only increase understanding of the problems educators face and validate their efforts to create quality programs with serious standards of achievement. Again, the work which will need to be done to transform today's largely laissez faire climate into one in which accountability is the norm is enormous. However, that work will also be establishing a climate in which Jewish education has a real chance to succeed, something which it often lacks today.

Developing New Human Resources

The fourth item on the public agenda for Jewish education has been a staple of prescriptions for improving Jewish education for decades: increasing the numbers and improving the quality of the people involved in education. All of the familiar components of these prescriptions can be heard today as well: the need to recruit more teachers and administrators; the importance of enhancing professional training; the demand to provide better salaries and benefits. Even the call for restructuring positions to create more opportunities for full-time employment in Jewish education, which is often voiced today, is not a new one.

All of these are important agenda items, and all have proven frustratingly difficult to implement in the past. What is different in the present is that two other elements have been attached to this agenda which are, if not entirely new, then at least potentially newly significant in the current context. The first is a new interest in the role and contribution of the "avocational" educator. No one suggests

that Jewish education does not need a larger cadre of talented, trained, committed professionals. Yet, if we are faithful to our vision of an educational endeavor which is far more pervasive than that which we maintain today, it is difficult to imagine how we could ever have enough professionals to fill all of the new roles which would emerge. Nor is it self-evident that all of these roles, or even all of the roles in the current system, should be filled by educational professionals. Does not the presence of those who are not professional educators as teachers, youth workers, adult educators, counsellors, etc., perhaps advance the goal of bringing education into a more organic relationship with the community it seeks to permeate?

Some, undoubtedly, will see this as a particularly suspicious form of lemonade-making. Stuck with a shortage of trained professionals, we will now make a virtue out of the necessity of making do with amateurs. I would suggest, however, that we not rush to judgment. Amateurs who bring a genuine love of Jewish learning and teaching to their avocational work can also be trained to master the skills requisite for success in that work without becoming full-fledged professionals. The challenge is to turn what is now indeed a sad necessity -- the utilization in Jewish education of many who lack the appropriate background and training to be effective educators -- into a planned desideratum -- the carefully structured and supervised involvement of large numbers of caring Jews in the work of teaching and guiding other Jews. Creating an educational system of, by, and for the Jewish people without sacrificing standards of performance will be difficult, but beleaguered professionals should welcome the addition of new allies to their ranks who can come to appreciate and to mediate to the community at large both their aspirations and their frustrations.

The second new element in the agenda of human resources development for Jewish education also points toward a broadening of involvement in the stewardship of the educational process: the creation of a lay leadership cadre for Jewish education. Lay people have, of course, always been involved in educational decision-making and governance. An honest appraisal of their role and impact, however, must conclude that Jewish education has belonged primarily to its professional practitioners. Whether by abdication, disempowerment, or whatever combination thereof, lay involvement in Jewish

education has been primarily custodial, rather than substantive. Those who have been involved have constituted a relatively small elite, frequently isolated from other leadership segments in the community. The parochial atmosphere of much of Jewish education has further discouraged the involvement of many powerful and prestigious volunteers. And Jewish education has suffered grievously as a result.

It is critical that lay leadership assume ownership of Jewish education -- at least as partners, if not as sole proprietors. To exercise a constructive role, they too will need training. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the current agenda for Jewish education on the need to recruit a new group of volunteer leaders who will lend their energies and resources to that endeavor is not misplaced. For educators, the opportunity to mold and to mobilize a leadership cadre who will be truly conversant with educational issues and who will assume responsibility for the achievements of the system is priceless. If we are serious about creating a community infused by education, here is the place to start. Today, professions of interest in Jewish education are coming from unexpected sources. These professions must be welcomed, even when they come with misconceptions. The misconceptions can be erased; the interest is the seed from which dramatic change can grow.

Creating a Jewish Educational System

Jewish education today is a "system" without order, without interdependence, without coordination. That is to say, it is no system at all. It is a collection of parts which generally do not work together, which even, at times, work at cross purposes. It does not plan, it does not organize the flow of resources among its component elements in any rational fashion. The same child may attend a school, a camp, a youth program, and an Israel trip -- even ones sponsored by the same denominational movement -- and experience virtually no connection among them. The asystemic character of Jewish education is not limited to programming. There is no coordinated mechanism for dealing with personnel needs -- recruitment, training, and placement; for disseminating educational information and resources; for funding or evaluating new projects.

In this, of course, Jewish education mirrors once more the community in which it is embedded. But the dysfunctions of this state of affairs, in education if not yet in the community as a whole, are

now becoming evident to those who are fashioning Jewish education's agenda. Neither expanding the educational canvas, nor extending the life-cycle, nor establishing accountability, nor developing new human resources, is possible without coordinated and systematic action. Slowly but surely, those who have thus far led essentially separate lives insofar as Jewish education has been concerned, especially the synagogues and federations, are beginning to talk to one another. They are recognizing -- not without some difficulty -- that no single institution or set of institutions has the ability to carry out the full range of tasks required today to reinvigorate Jewish education.

Once more, what is most promising in the new ventures in community-wide educational planning which are springing up around the country is not necessarily the plans which result. The plans are important, and it is especially noteworthy that they all tend to focus on the outlines of the agenda presented above. By themselves, however, plans change nothing. Rather, it is the creation of a new community constituency for Jewish education in the process of planning together that makes change conceivable. The effort to create a more far-reaching, tightly integrated, mutually supportive system for delivering Jewish education can itself generate a more cohesive, united community, one which may discover that Jewish education is the both the vehicle for and focus of its communality. We are still a long way from this today. But the first steps are being taken, and we may find that by the time we have designed a model educational system, we will actually have the kind of community ready to make it work!

Is this a vision, or pure fantasy? The historical record of Jewish educational reform in America warrants a healthy skepticism about the prospects for genuine transformation. Clifford Geertz has compared maintaining religious faith to hanging a picture on a nail driven into its own frame. Look too carefully at the set of interlocking assumptions and assertions, and the whole structure collapses. Perhaps my suggestion that current efforts to strengthen Jewish education can induce the communal and cultural transformation which can enable the educational changes to take hold falls into the same category.

I am convinced that at least two major caveats are in order: First, I have little confidence that the agenda I have outlined can produce major transformation unless we recognize explicitly the depth and dimensions of the transformation required and accept no less as our goal. We can serendipitously initiate a process more far-reaching than we intended, but we cannot complete it in this fashion. We must be prepared to accept the premise that the character of our community will determine the effectiveness of our education, and understand that it is the community, and not the educational system alone, which must be changed. The current agenda points in that direction; we must look at the end, not just the means.

Second, the process of transformation must eventually touch many thousands, perhaps millions of Jews who today have no part and little interest in the efforts underway. I don't believe that we shall ever see the day when all, nearly all, or even a substantial proportion of American Jews live what we might define as "full" Jewish lives. But there will have to be a solid minority of Jews who will participate in the educating community and culture I have envisioned, or it will not be the community and culture of American Jewry. I do not pretend to know how many are required -- how many families must study together, how many students must attend day high schools, how many synagogues must revitalize their educational programs, how many young people must experience Israel in a profound way -- but I know that it is many more than we have today. We should not, however, despair at this prospect. Three quarters of our children already receive some Jewish education at some point during their youth. That is surely a base large enough on which to build.

Despite these caveats, I remain cautiously optimistic. I believe that having fought, successfully, the struggle for adjustment and (thus far at least) the struggle for survival, American Jewry is ready for a new challenge, the challenge of creating a true American Jewish community and culture. What we envision for Jewish education and what we do to realize that vision are at the heart of that challenge. If we will it, it need not remain merely a vision.

NOTES

1. Isa Aron, "Instruction and Enculturation in Jewish Education," Unpublished manuscript, pp. 3-4.
2. Sheldon A. Dorph, "A New Direction for Jewish Education in America," in Studies in Jewish Education and Judaica in Honor of Louis Newman, ed. by Alexander M. Shapiro and Burton I. Cohen (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), p. 108.
3. Barry Chazan, "The State of Jewish Education" (New York: JESNA, 1988), p. 8.
4. Susan Rosenblum Shevitz, "Communal Responses to the Teacher Shortage in the North American Supplementary School," in Studies in Jewish Education, Volume III, ed. by Janet Aviad (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988), pp. 25-61.
5. Ronald Reynolds, "Goals and Effectiveness in Jewish Education: An Organizational Perspective," in Studies in Jewish Education, Volume III, ed. by Janet Aviad (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988), pp. 91-115.

