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Atlanta, Ga. New Atlanta Jewish High School, 1993-1996.

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Task Force on High School Education  
Eliot Arnovitz, Chair

Report on Site Visits

February 1, 1993

Introduction

The Task Force on High School Education was appointed by the President of the Atlanta Jewish Federation in June 1992 in response to a group of individuals in the Jewish community who were expressing serious interest in starting a second Jewish high school. The mission of the Task Force was to help those interested in a new school explore various models for such a school and to determine whether there is sufficient need and interest in the community so as to assure the viability of the model which they envision.

Site visits to seven schools were organized and various members of the Task Force participated in those visits which took place between November 1992 and January 1993. The visits were very informative and resulted in many offers of further assistance. The participants were: Eliot Arnovitz, Chair, Steve Berman, Elaine Blumenthal, Perry Brickman, Immediate Past President of the Federation, Lynne Halpern, Larry Joseph, and Felicia Weber. Federation staff participating were Lauren Azoulai and David Sarnat.

The schools visited were in Atlanta and in the Northeast and are described below. Although information collected from the schools may not have been uniform, this report attempts to be as comprehensive as possible regarding basic descriptive information, curricular and pedagogical issues, and subjective comments offered by the school representatives with whom we met. Data is based on information provided by key informants at the schools and was collected either during the site visits or subsequent to them by telephone.

Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, Upper School,  
West Orange, New Jersey

Descriptive Information:

Affiliation: United Synagogue of America and its Solomon Schechter day schools

Religious Orientation: Conservative

Founded: 1965; 1973 - first year with a ninth grade; by Horace Bier and Rabbi Elvin Kose at a Conservative congregation in Union, New Jersey

Grades: Founded with a Kindergarten and a first grade; first ninth grade high school class added in 1973 and was graduated in 1977

Present Enrollment: Total school population - 835; Upper school - 330 students

Average Student/Teacher Ratio: 15-18

Capacity of the Upper School is 450-500

Budget of Entire School: \$6,443,735

Cost per child for education: \$10,000

Tuition of Upper School: \$6,890

Scholarships: \$659,000 Total School

Fund Raising: \$1,800 per family over 2 years.

Endowments: \$1.4 Million

Composition of Student Body by Religious Affiliation  
(Approximately):

Conservative 75% Reform, Orthodox and Unaffiliated 25%

Composition of Faculty by Religious Affiliation  
(Approximately):

Orthodox 10% Conservative 60% Reform 5% Non-Jewish 25%

Eligibility for Enrollment: Anyone considered Jewish as defined by Jewish law in the Conservative movement may apply. They may apply for Nursery thru 4th or 7th thru 9th. In all other grades the children must be transfer students from other day schools. Only children who the Admissions Committee believes can handle the dual Judaic and general curriculum will be accepted.

## Curriculum & Pedagogy

Ratio of Judaic and General Studies: Approximately 1/3 Judaic and 2/3 general, however, the curriculum is an integrated one throughout the day. All classes except Physical Education are co-educational.

Hebrew Language: Required study of Hebrew; Hebrew is not considered toward foreign language requirement.

General Studies: Math, Science, Arts, and Foreign language instruction are all offered according to the highest academic standards. Honors and AP courses are available.

Judaic Studies: Text-based, includes Torah, Neviim, Katavium, Rabbinics, Jewish History and Hebrew language.

Israel Component: During second semester of senior year, students may choose a work-study experience in Jerusalem. (Alternative track: continued study at the school with a seven week work experience in the U.S.)

Minyan: Obligatory for all students. Two minyanim are offered: Conservative egalitarian and Conservative with males only leading services and reading from the Torah. The school's philosophy addresses the essential component of study of and familiarity with prayer.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Student government, Tzedakah program, trips, dances, newspaper, yearbook, National Honor Society, soccer, softball, basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading.

## Subjective Comments:

- \* A successful Jewish high school must have excellence in general studies.
- \* A successful Jewish high school must have a clear philosophy and stick to it.
- \* Academic leadership is necessary as the school is being created.

Yeshivah of Flatbush, Joel Braverman High School,  
Brooklyn, New York

Descriptive Information:

Religious Orientation: Halachic Judaism

Founded: 1927

Grades: 9 thru 12

Present Enrollment: 800 High School 2,052 Entire School

Student/Teacher: 23-32 Students per class

Budget: \$13.5 Million

Tuition: \$7,700 - 9th, \$8,150 10-12 High School

Scholarship: \$3 Million is awarded; 50% of the students are on assistance or 1/3 of the families; Awards range from \$500 Thru Full Scholarships

Fund Raising: Those not on assistance - assessed \$400 minimum; an assessment is figured into the cost for those on assistance.

Endowments: \$2 Million for school

Composition of Student Body by Religious Affiliation:

Orthodox 80% Other Affiliations 5% Unaffiliated 15%

Composition of Faculty by Religious Affiliation 90% Orthodox

Eligibility for Enrollment: Must be day school graduates, and Jewish according to Halacha. Number of applicants accepted: 185 out of 260 applicants.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Ratio of Judaic and General Studies: 50/50. An integrated curriculum during the school day of general and Judaic studies.

Hebrew Language: the language of instruction in all Judaics classes, Hebrew language is studied four years and is not considered a foreign language.

General Studies: English, History, Science, Romance Languages, Mathematics.

Judaic Studies: Text-based, includes TaNaCH, Talmud, History, Philosophy and Literature.

Israel Component: students are encouraged to spend their first year of university study at an Israeli Torah Institution.

Community Service Program: Part of required curriculum, forty hours each year.

Minyan: There are two daily required minyanim, Shacharit and Mincha, each with separate seating or separate minyan. A Sephardic and an Ashkenazic minyan are both available.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Athletic teams, chess and math teams, publications, seminar retreats and academic clubs.

Subjective Comments:

- \* The school must have a philosophy, be clear about it; and faithful to it.
- \* The general studies must be of the highest calibre in order to attract students.
- \* It is important that students learn what it is to live Jewishly, not just to learn about it.

The Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein Upper School of Ramaz,  
Manhattan, NY

Descriptive Information:

Affiliation: Member of New York State Association of  
Independent Schools and COY - the Council of Yeshiva.

Religious Orientation: Modern or Centrist Orthodoxy

Founded: 1937 by the late Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein who was  
its first principal until 1971.

Grades: Nursery through Twelfth

Present Enrollment: Upper 9/12 - 410; 7/12 - 523

Capacity of Upper School: 523 - waiting list for all classes

Budget of Upper School: \$9.3 Million

Tuition of Upper School: \$7,275

Scholarship: 9-12 /25% - 40% \$100 Scholarship - 1,090

Fund Raising: Dinner Dance, give or raise \$750 per family per .  
year. Required contribution to the Capital expenditure  
fund - \$2,000 a year, except for those on scholarship for  
whom it is included in their total package.

Endowments: \$3.5 Million

Composition of Student Body by Religious Affiliation  
(Approximately):

Orthodox 95% Conservative 2.5% Israeli Non-affiliated 2.5%

Composition of Faculty by Religious Affiliation:

Orthodox 70% Remainder include: other affiliated;  
unaffiliated and non-Jewish

Eligibility for Enrollment: Must be day school graduates or  
be from Israel and on par with other students. Students  
must be Jewish according to Halacha. Only one of three  
applicants is accepted.

Curriculum and Pedagogy:

Ratio of Judaic and General Studies: 50/50 An integrated  
curriculum during school day, including an integrated  
history curriculum, Judaic studies and General studies.  
All classes except Physical Education are co-educational.

Hebrew Language: The language of instruction in all Judaics classes, the Hebrew language is studied all four years. It is not considered a foreign language.

General Studies: Full range of English, History, Math, Science, and Foreign Languages, including accelerated Math, intensified Science program, Music, Art, Health and Physical Education.

Judaic Studies: text-based, includes Hebrew language and literature, TaNaCh, Talmud, and Jewish Thought.

Israel Component: Students are encouraged to spend one year on a program in Israel following graduation and before beginning university studies. The school provides placement college assistance as well as guidance advisers in Israel.

Minyan: Twice-daily Minyan is required for all students. Minyan is conducted with a Mechitza.

Extra-Curricular Activities: full program of intramural and inter-school team sports; student government, 26 clubs ranging from SADD and Environmental Club to AIPAC and Model UN, Competitions, publications, and the Arts.

Subjective Comments:

- \* Be sure of what you want to be. Have a philosophy and do not compromise it.
- \* The school must have an excellent general studies program to succeed.



Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, Upper School, Rockville, MD

Descriptive Information:

Affiliation: Solomon Schechter affiliate

Religious Orientation: Pluralistic

Founded: 1965; High School - 1972

Grades: Kindergarten thru 12

Present Enrollment: 395 Students 7 - 12

Average Student/Teacher Ratio: 1:5 to 1:35

Capacity of Upper School: 400

Budget of Entire School: \$7.5 Million

Tuition: \$7,000

Scholarship: 13% of Entire Budget

Fund Raising: Nothing Mandated

Endowments: Over a Million

Composition of Student Body by Religious Affiliation:

Orthodox 10% Conservative 75%  
Others, including unaffiliated 15%

Composition of Faculty by Religious Affiliation:

Orthodox 5% Conservative 75% Reform 5% Unaffiliated 8%  
Reconstructionist 5% Non-Jews 2%

Eligibility for Enrollment: Jewish - but with no clear definition as to "who is a Jew," first come, first serve policy, but same may be counseled out.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Ratio of Judaic and General Studies: 3 Judaic to 4 General.  
All classes except Physical Education are co-educational.

Hebrew Language: required study of Hebrew; Hebrew is not considered toward a foreign language requirement.

General Studies: Math, Science, Arts, History, Business, Computers, Foreign Language instruction are all offered.

Judaic Studies: text-based TaNaCH and Rabbinics, and Jewish History.

Israel Component: A semester program is offered in conjunction with the Ramah program in Israel.

Minyan: Once a week required for all upper school students, both Egalitarian Msorati (Conservative) and Orthodox minyanim are sponsored by the Upper School. Sixty students attend the Orthodox Minyan. There have recently been requests for a non-egalitarian mesorati minyan. The school expects students to achieve Jewish literacy and competency.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Student Council, Honor Societies, inter-scholastic athletics, theater, year book, literary magazines, newspaper, and more.

Community Service: this is a required part of the curriculum.

Subjective Comments:

- \* C. E. Smith has had difficulties with its stance as a community school, with "community" meaning: "all abilities", "all economic backgrounds", and "all jewish religious backgrounds, including those who are not Jewish according to Halacha. The school needs a clear philosophy and vision. Avoid having a "parve" school.
- \* Look at what unites those interested in a new school, and then use that as a starting point for the new school.
- \* If you start a community school, it should have a set minimum standards. The school must have clear objectives, great faculty Competence, excellent leadership. The school has to pass the "test of sunlight." Kids must leave understanding why it is important to be a Jew.
- \* There must be excellence in general studies.
- \* Make sure the facility used or built is appropriate for a high school.
- \* The school and its faculty must have demonstrated passion.

Paideia High School, Atlanta, GA

Descriptive Information:

Affiliation: Non-sectarian, private school

Founded: 1921

Grades: 9 - 12 High School

Present Enrollment in High School: 250 Students

Capacity of High School: Goal is to reach a capacity of 300 in the high school through physical expansion.

Tuition: Approximately \$7,000

Scholarship: 11% of total student body receive financial aid.  
Total school financial aid given is \$304,000 a year.

Endowments: Exist and support different programs.

Composition of Student Body by Ethnic/Religious Affiliation:  
Very Diverse.

Curriculum & Pedagogy:

There are a minimum number of years of study in different academic disciplines required. Most students voluntarily take five years of courses in these areas.

Academic schedules vary, and levels of courses vary.

Paideia students are expected to write frequently. There are many long term assignments and courses often include a variety of evaluations so that students can demonstrate knowledge in different ways. There is a minimum of rote learning.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Student council, athletic teams, clubs, musical and drama groups, and service organizations.

Monday Morning Meeting is run by students every week and are used for announcements, skits, poetry, and more.

Community Service: sixty hours of community service is required for graduates.

Subjective Comments:

- \* High School should have 50-60 students per class and should not exceed 400.

Yeshiva High School, Atlanta, GA

Descriptive Information:

Religious Orientation: Orthodox

Founded: 1970 with an eighth grade call; recognized as an exemplary school in 1985.

Grades: 7 - 12

Present Enrollment: 154

Average Student/Teacher Ratio: Average 12 - 15

Capacity of School: 350

Budget: \$986,000

Tuition: \$6,300

Scholarship: 87 Students on scholarship; total \$388,545; \$25,000 Discounts

Fund Raising: Only requirement is that scholarship families have to sell Kroger Certificates.

Composition of Student Body by Religious Affiliation

Orthodox 44 Conservative 75 Reform 6  
New Americans 25 (various or no affiliation)

Composition of Faculty by Religious Affiliation

Orthodox 8 Conservative 2 Reform 2 Unaffiliated 3  
Christians 5

Eligibility for Enrollment: Yeshiva High School is open to all children who are Jewish according to Halacha, grades 7-12, regardless of their affiliation. A day school elementary background is not required.

Curriculum and Pedagogy:

Ratio of Judaic and General studies: 45% Judaic studies and 55% General studies. The boys study the Judaic curriculum in the morning and the general studies in the afternoon. The girls' schedule is reversed. No Judaic studies classes and only a few general studies classes are co-educational. Due to scheduling demands, a few of the general studies are co-educational.

Hebrew Language: required study of Hebrew which is not considered a foreign language.

General Studies: English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education. Some students include in their curriculum courses at Dekalb College. Advanced placement courses which are offered periodically.

Judaic Studies: Jewish Law, Philosophy, Ethics and Litergy, Jewish History, Meshner, Talmud, Prophets, and Bible are taught. They are complemented by co-curricular Judaic activities ranging from a Beis Midrash Program to celebrations of holidays.

Israel Component: this is offered as an option to further Judaic studies in the 12th grade or after graduation.

Minyan: Required; separate for boys and girls.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Student council, Year book, newspaper, basketball, intramural sports activities, chess, tennis, drama and more.

Subjective Comments:

- \* They feel they need a higher enrollment to improve the opportunities at the school.
- \* Female students benefit more from the classroom experience in single sex classes.
- \* They would like to improve both their library and science facilities.
- \* The school knows it needs to increase its endowments to enable the school to hire more full time faculty who would be able to concentrate in their areas of expertise.

Akiba Hebrew Academy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Descriptive Information

Affiliation: Jewish Community Day School Network

Religious Orientation: Pluralistic

Founded: 1946 by leaders of the Conservative movement in the greater Philadelphia area

Grades: 7 thru 12 (some years there is also a 6th grade)

Present Enrollment: 317 in school; 220 in 9 thru 12

Average Class Size: 15

Budget: 3.5 million; accumulated deficit of \$1 million;  
Federation allocation has been \$400,000 for the past seven years

Tuition: \$9,350

Scholarships: 50% of the scholarship funds are given to students receiving 80 to 90% scholarships. \$700,000 a year is awarded

Fund-Raising: There are no requirements of the parents, but they are encouraged to contribute.

Endowments: The school has \$500,000 in unrestricted funds, and \$500,00 in restricted funds, but more endowments are needed by the school.

Composition of the student body by religious affiliation:  
95% Conservative; 3% Orthodox; 2% Reform and unaffiliated

Composition of Faculty by Religious affiliation: Among the six rabbis on the faculty, two are Orthodox, two are Conservative and two are Reconstructionist. The rest of the faculty and staff is also mixed, though there are more Conservatives than any other group.

Eligibility for Enrollment: Open to all Jewish students. No one is turned away because of financial need, although they may self-select. Students may be turned away because of emotional problems or because it is ascertained that they will not be able to handle the curriculum.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Ratio of Judaic and General studies is one third Judaics and two thirds general with integrated scheduling throughout the day. All classes are co-educational.

Hebrew Language: required study of Hebrew which is not considered a foreign language. An ulpan is available for those who enter school in ninth or tenth grade without a day school background.

Judaics: The text-based curriculum consists of rabbinics, Bible, and Hebrew. In the rabbinics program, students study life cycle, ethics, philosophy, mishna, and gemora.

General Studies: These are general college preparatory, including specialized and Advanced Placement courses and honors and independent studies. The arts are not part of the regular curriculum.

Israel Component: A semester in Israel program is offered for juniors, although not required.

Minyan: Daily Minyan is not compulsory at Akiba. The middle school has tefila once a week with an explanation of the prayers, but the Akiba experience does not necessarily enhance the prayer skills of its students.

Extra-Curricular Activities: The athletics program includes intramural and interscholastic competition in soccer, cross-country, basketball, wrestling, softball and tennis. An arts program is offered as an after school major. Other cultural and social activities are offered and there is a variety of clubs for the students.

Community Service: The senior year culminates in an intensive six-week community service program.

#### Subjective Comments

- \* Akiba is a "community" school which has been re-defining the meaning of "community" for 45 years, but the administration feels that it is part of the school's strength. They seek diversity and neshama while at the same time seek to not be pareve. The pluralistic philosophy allows for a tension which leads to a questioning of "what does pluralistic mean?"
- \* Akiba is not a "Jewish prep school," although it is academically competitive with the best college prep schools in the area.
- \* The school's physical plant is lacking, especially in the area of athletics and the arts.
- \* Compulsory prayer is an issue at Akiba. The current administration would like to see more compulsory prayer as well as teaching of religious skills. Only about 20 students attend the minyan. The school does not mandate religious practice.

- \* The school's main competition is the other local college prep schools. The only other Jewish high schools are two small Orthodox ones, one for boys and one for girls.
- \* There is an increasing number of average students in the school as well as those with learning disabilities. The latter receive outside help which is coordinated with the Akiba faculty.
- \* The school is guided by and determined by the knowledge of the Board, but the direction is given by the faculty. It is a democratic institution with a voice for both the faculty and students. Students are included in the Education committee and the search committee.
- \* Among the areas which the administrators said they would handle differently:

A better facility, no more teachers union, lower the tuition, downsize the board and have fewer parents on it, anchor the school in a commitment to ritual in the Jewish community and produce students who have Jewish skills, have a dress code and increase the number of reform and orthodox students so as to have a critical mass of each.



## Conclusion

In reviewing various models of Jewish day high schools, it is clear that there are numerous issues and considerations which will need to be addressed by any group which might choose to go forward in founding a new Jewish day high school in Atlanta.

The mission of the school and its related philosophy would form the basis for all decisions regarding religious, curricular and pedagogical issues. In fact, the one comment which was made by almost every school visited was that there needs to be a clearly defined philosophy to which the school should adhere.

Curricular issues were also thought to be of utmost importance. The primary importance of an excellent general studies program was stressed by most of the schools as key for attracting students to the school. All the Jewish schools taught Hebrew, but not as a foreign language, and all the Judaic studies programs were text-based. An Israel component was either offered as part of the curriculum at the Jewish day high school or encouraged as a follow-up program to graduation.

Questions regarding the designation of an institution as a "community school" should be given careful consideration and resolved prior to the possible opening of such a school. These include compulsory prayer, minyanim offered, dress code (including wearing kippot), kashrut, separation of the sexes, participation in athletic competitions on Shabbat, and most important, eligibility for enrollment.

In this report, data has been presented, and some of the issues have been clarified. Those who participated in the site visits should be able to serve as resources in the future, and as indicated above, most of the administrators with whom we met have offered further assistance.



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## REPORT TO THE TASK FORCE ON HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION PRELIMINARY MARKETING STUDY FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Adrienne Bank, Ph.D.  
Educational Consultant  
May 24, 1993

### Summary

As part of the work of the Task Force on High School Education, focus groups and interviews with 130 students, parents, educators and community leaders were conducted during the first week of May, 1993. Their purpose was to find out if there was sufficient interest in a second Jewish high school in Atlanta to move forward with the discussion.

Great interest was expressed by parents for a Jewish high school that would have a high quality academic program and sufficient staff and facilities to offer many options and electives. Students wanted to make sure that such a high school would be large enough for them to meet new friends and that there would be good teachers and many extra curricular activities.

Parents and community leaders held a broad range of opinions as to the requirements and nature of the Judaic studies curriculum although all agreed that it must be pluralistic. They differed in their preferences for a school structure -- either broad-band, serving all Jewish students in the community, or narrow-band serving the non-Orthodox community. To shape these diverse opinions into unified support for an operating Jewish high school will require enthusiastic leadership and educational expertise. However, anticipated growth in the Jewish population of Atlanta, along with the expressed willingness of non-Orthodox Jewish parents to consider the possibility of an entire pre-collegiate Jewish educational experience for their children, clearly indicates that next steps in the planning process should be undertaken.

The mission of the Task Force on High School Education is to help those interested in the possibilities of a second Jewish High School in Atlanta to explore various models for such a school; and to determine whether there is sufficient need and interest in the community for such a school.

In pursuit of their first task, the group visited a number of Jewish day high schools on the East Coast as well as two high schools within Atlanta. In carrying out its second task -- that of ascertaining the level of interest in Atlanta for a second Jewish High School -- this focus group study was commissioned.

### Methodology

During the week of May 3, 1993, focus groups were arranged with students from the Epstein School, Hebrew Academy, Yeshiva High School, Tichon Atlanta; and with parents from these same schools as well as with parents of students at the Davis Academy and those whose children were attending non-Jewish private schools. Personal and phone interviews were held with educators, rabbis and lay and professional leaders at the Federation and with several parents with children in public schools. Although a focus group for parents of public school children only was not conducted, there were many parents in the other groups with elementary and secondary school age children in public schools. (See Attachment A)

The purpose of the focus groups was to ascertain from respondents their views about what the high school experience should be like, their preferences for a Jewish high school that would meet their individual needs, and their level of interest in a possible new Jewish high school in Atlanta. Their responses are useful in understanding what features would be attractive to them in a new Jewish high school but no inferences should be drawn about the likely number of enrollees in a new school from their comments. These focus groups constituted an exploratory study with a selected group of knowledgeable respondents rather than a random sample from the entire pool of potentially available families. (See Attachment B)

Notes, tape recordings and questionnaire data provided the basis for the findings summarized below which describe those issues most frequently raised by the respondents. (See Attachment C)

It should be noted that the findings and conclusions reported below have been influenced by the comments and opinions of these particular respondents. Conversations with other public and private school students

and parents and with other Jewish adults not closely connected with the organized Jewish community might surface different points of view.

## Findings

### **What did respondents want in a high school?**

There were many differences of opinion on the part of parents about high schools in general and about a Jewish high school in particular. These seemed to be related to individuals' values and to their own academic and Jewish experiences. There did not seem to be an identifiable consistency of views among those whose children attended a particular day, public or private school. Rather, each focus group seemed to represent a broad cross section of views. However, there was a marked difference between students and parents in what each group seemed to want most in a high school.

**Students focused primarily on who would be their peers and their teachers, and what extra-curricular activities would be like.**

***Friends and social life.*** When asked what was important to them when they thought about high school, students talked about the importance of friends -- other students who they would like to associate with. They wanted to meet new people in high school but they also wanted to keep their old friends. Some students wanted to know non-Jewish kids and experience what a non-Jewish world is like. Others thought that they could get that through outside of school activities.

Social life at school is very important to them. They are concerned about cliques. Depending on their experience, some say there are more cliques in a large school than in a small one, others think the opposite. They expressed some concern about large public schools - about being one of only a few Jews, about dating, about pressures to smoke, about not knowing anyone.

***Good teachers.*** Students wanted teachers who could offer them a range of options. But most importantly, they wanted teachers who would treat them as people and who would be interested in their ideas. They wanted teachers who know their subject, who don't "teach from the book" and are interesting. They prefer small classes where they can get individual attention.

***Extra-curricular activities.*** After friends and teachers, extra curricular activities are very much on students' minds when they think of high school. The students already in high school talked about school spirit, band, orchestra, athletics, drama, other arts groups; and the students who were anticipating high school expressed similar interests.

**Parents' first concerns, on the other hand, were with academic offerings and with facilities which they saw as necessary to support a good school.**

***High quality academic programs.*** Parents expressed their primary wishes in terms of strong academics. By this, some meant a strong traditional college preparatory program. Others emphasized process skills as more important than facts and think that high school is a time to learn how to learn, how to think and do research. Some would like to see an integrated curriculum, others wanted to explore the Essential Schools model. Most expressed interest in having an honors program as well as many options and electives. With a few exceptions, there was agreement that enrollment should be open to all Jewish children who can benefit from the educational program at the school rather than setting a floor for admissions through testing or grade point averages.

***Adequate size and adequate facilities.*** Parents, to a greater extent than students, equated the size of school with the availability of quality programs and options. Opinions varied as to the optimum size -- ranging from a low of approximately 150 (computed at 15-20 students per class, two classes per grade, four grades ) to a high of 500. Parents also saw the facilities -- including library, science labs, athletic fields - as an important factor in being able to provide adequate instruction and adequate extra-curricular activities. They saw good facilities, conveniently located, as necessary to attract families who otherwise would send their children to private schools.

**What did respondents want Jewishly in a high school?**

Students in the two Jewish middle schools liked their current Jewish studies, especially Bible, and they liked studying Hebrew. They did not comment specifically on course requirements or electives.

**Parents and community leaders held many different opinions as to the desirable intensity of the Jewish curriculum. It is possible to group their views into three orientations with variations within each.**

***A Jewish environment for Jewish students.*** The first orientation stressed the importance of the Jewish environment for students and the need of high schoolers to associate with Jewish peers. For people with this view, the Jewish component of the curriculum might be satisfied with electives only.

***Strong dual secular and Jewish curricula.*** A second orientation stressed a strong required Jewish curriculum, including Hebrew language study, in parallel with the academic curriculum, with additional electives available. Various formulas indicating the relationship between general studies, Jewish studies and electives were suggested (e.g., 50%, 20%, 30%). Others asked whether certain courses such as history, literature, philosophy, the arts could have integrated content.

***Strong dual curricula, plus.*** A third orientation was like the second, but with an additional element -- either an emphasis on Tikkun Olam and service to the community, or an emphasis on Israel with study and a trip being part of the curriculum, or an emphasis on family education with parents committed to some form of study. Individuals expressing this view wanted the school to assert an important and unique Jewish vision in addition to having both secular and Jewish courses.

Parents and community leaders also expressed many differing views about the approaches to Judaism that the school should emphasize. Some wanted an emphasis on religion and observance which, everyone agreed, should respect and reflect Jewish pluralism. Others preferred an intellectual emphasis stressing history, the arts, and applications of Jewish thought to contemporary issues. Still others said that everything should be offered, with the choices made by students and their parents. Whatever the emphasis, however, it seemed important to the parents that teachers would live their Jewishness rather than merely teach about it, and that they would be good role models for the students. All respondents hoped that a Jewish high school would produce young people who were comfortable with their Jewishness, strongly identified as Jews and committed to leading a Jewishly informed life.

There were two major views about how to structure such a high school: broad-band and narrow-band.

A ***broad-band structure*** envisaged a single large Jewish high school where all students would participate in a common academic curriculum but



would separate for their Jewish studies. There would be multiple tracks accommodating those who would want a curriculum such as that at Yeshiva High School as well as those who would want a non-Orthodox curriculum. It was suggested that the schools might even be constituted as separately governed entities on the same site to give each group policy authority over its students. The major advantage seen for this structure was that the large population would make possible many facilities, courses and extra-curricular options and that Jewish students from many different kinds of backgrounds would get to know one another. The major disadvantages of this structure was the sense that it would not be possible for some students who would be attending Yeshiva High School, for some teachers at Yeshiva or for some leaders in the Orthodox community to agree to this arrangement. It might also be the case that such a school would be very difficult to staff. It was pointed out that there is no model anywhere in the country like this. Some felt that a school should not try to be all things to all people and that to attract and hold students it needs a specific guiding philosophy -- and that this vision encompassed too diverse a student population to serve well.

*A narrow-band structure* envisaged a pluralistic alternative to Yeshiva High School appealing primarily to Conservative and Reform Jews. Some suggested that this might either be an extension of the Epstein School; or an extension of Hebrew Academy; or a combined high school campus for most of the students in the two middle schools plus others. Advantages of this approach would be that a non-Orthodox Jewish school system would be created: three elementary schools feeding into two middle schools feeding into one high school. Yeshiva High School could then more directly meet the needs of the Orthodox community.

**What did respondents feel about being part of start-up high school?**

Some students and some parents were interested in becoming pioneers and being part of the start-up class, even if everything was not yet in place. However, more students and parents thought that having a full service facility with a large class already enrolled was preferable for themselves if they were to be part of the initial entering classes.

*Pioneer spirit.* The pioneers saw the advantages of helping to shape the school and its educational philosophy. They saw being part of the entering class of a new school as participation in an exciting experiment. They believed that it was possible to make connections in both the Jewish and

Atlanta communities in the early years to use existing athletic, library and arts facilities, to organize classes on other sites and to connect with the universities and synagogues for teachers until the school became more established.

***Full services preferred.*** Others -- a somewhat larger group -- responded to what they saw as the disadvantages of being in the start-up classes if the facilities, teaching staff, curriculum and extracurricular activities were not all in place at the very beginning. Some students worried that the school would be too small at the beginning.

For some parents, the newness of the school seemed risk enough without opening it lacking the necessary accommodations and staff. They thought that it was essential, in order to attract a sufficient number of students, that the school be top-notch, well located and equipped right from the beginning, since they anticipated that the initial lack of accreditation and the absence of an established track record of college admissions might already be two important inhibiting influences on parents' decisions to send their children during the start-up years.

### **What did respondents feel about Yeshiva High School?**

**Students not attending Yeshiva and parents without children in the school had both positive and negative views about Yeshiva most of which seemed based on partial knowledge. Everyone had an example or two to buttress their opinions but few people seemed to know precisely what the facts were about the current situation at the school. Whether based on perception or on reality, there were many parents and students who did not consider Yeshiva High an option for themselves for reasons of size, facilities, academic quality or Orthodox orientation.**

Commonly held perceptions of the school were that: it was Orthodox in philosophy and "feel" even though many of the students who attended were Conservative and Reform; that the teachers in the Judaic studies program were very Orthodox; that these teachers were good role models and lived their Judaism, but that some Conservative and Reform students may have felt uncomfortable both with the content and the manner of teaching, particularly as they related to women's issues and roles.

Most people thought that most of the classes were not co-ed, that girls were not permitted to study Talmud, that the dress code was very restrictive and that dating was discouraged.



Opinions differed as to whether the academic program was good -- some parents pointing to honors classes and a good record of college acceptance -- or whether the academic program was poor because there were too few tracks, too few science classes, too few teachers to offer enough options, and not enough attention to students with learning disabilities.

There was a sense among community leaders that Yeshiva High School was somewhat fragile in its ability to appeal to non-Orthodox families. Some felt that the school might increase its enrollment through better marketing and with more accurate information about its activities disseminated in the community; but others felt that it could never make the changes needed to attract greater numbers of non-Orthodox students.

Some people worried about the possibilities of a negative effect on Yeshiva from even starting serious explorations for an alternative high school while others saw such conversations as producing salutary results and stimulating a much needed clarification by Yeshiva's administration and Board of the direction in which the school intends to move over the next five years.

## Conclusions

**Is there a market for a new Jewish high school?**

**It appears that there is a substantial market for another kind of Jewish high school in Atlanta due both to the "push" factors present in the Atlanta environment and to "pull" factors coming from the desire of non-Orthodox parents to have their children educated Jewishly.**

***Expanding population.*** The Atlanta community is growing as a cosmopolitan center where employment and quality of life are attracting many young adults and married couples among whom will be a large number of Jews ready to start families. ✓

***Erosion of public education.*** At the same time as the population is growing, the public education system in Atlanta, as in many other communities, is under stress due to declining resources relative to the large numbers of children who experience difficulties in school associated with transiency, second language learning, health and family problems. Some neighborhood public schools are more impacted than others. ✓

***Jewish commitment to public education is weakening.*** Jewish parents seek good education for their children. For many, their ideological support for public education -- seen by earlier generations of Jews as a way to become American and as a ladder for social mobility -- is eroding, based on family's personal experience with existing public schools in their neighborhoods.

***Interest in private education is growing due to higher academic standards and relative social safety .*** Private schools are seen as a way to ensure the personal attention and the academic preparation which will lead to a college education which, in turn, will lead to economic security in what seems to be an increasingly insecure future. Private schools are also seen as providing some measure of physical and psychological safety in turbulent times. So, many Jewish families -- often at great financial sacrifice -- are turning to private education for their children.

***Existing private schools in Atlanta have disadvantages.*** Many of Atlanta's private schools are Christian in orientation and have very small Jewish populations. And some of Atlanta's private schools may be reaching capacity and have many more applicants than they can admit. They can therefore tailor their admissions policies to achieve what they feel is an appropriate balance among different groups.

***A private high school with a pluralistic Jewish orientation would be welcome.*** Private Jewish day schools are becoming an increasingly acceptable option among many Jews since private schools with Christian orientations do not send explicit or implicit messages of support to Jewish children about their Jewishness. Neither do they provide opportunities for Jewish students to associate with many other Jewish students or to learn more about their own tradition and its values.

More and more Jewish parents seem to recognize that they need to create for themselves and their children a strong anchor of religious, moral and ethical knowledge and beliefs; and that Jewish schools can provide that anchoring identity. Many parents think that pre-high school experiences in a Jewish setting and with Jewish study are sufficient. But others say they now see high school as a critical time during which their children form their sense of who they are, develop their values and make lifelong friends. Some think that a proper understanding of the Jewish religious and intellectual tradition is more of an adolescent and adult enterprise than a pediatric task.

***The idea of a non-Orthodox pre-K through high school Jewish educational system is gaining support.*** Some young non-Orthodox Jewish parents, when they enroll their children in a pre-school or a day school kindergarten, might be willing to consider that their child's entire pre-collegiate experience will be within a Jewish framework, if they can manage the financial burden. If such thinking becomes common, the current flow from Jewish middle schools into non-Jewish high schools may diminish substantially. Parents may make the decision from the very beginning of their child's education to opt into a twelve year Jewish system of pre-collegiate education; and changing into another system will become the exception rather than the rule. However, when these parents look ahead, they need to see a high school which fits their own ideas of an appropriate academic and Jewish experience for their children.

***The market, initially, might be primarily Jewish middle school students but later, depending on its reputation, the school might also attract non-Orthodox Jewish students who are newcomers to Atlanta as well as Jewish students from public or non-Jewish private schools who do not find other high school options suitable for them; or whose parents think that high school is a more appropriate time than elementary school for Jewish study.***

**Can sufficient support be found for whatever Jewish high school is formed, especially in light of the expressed need for substantial enrollment?**

***A major parent education and student recruiting effort will be needed to attract a sufficient number of people to whatever non-Orthodox Jewish high school is conceptualized and brought into being.*** The decisions about specifics (e.g., school academic and Jewish philosophy, location, admissions and scholarship policy, staffing, course requirements, special programs, dress code,) which attract some will inevitably turn others away, given what appear to be very divergent views about the kind of academic and Judaic program parents and students now say they want.

However, a planned, systemic and targeted long term marketing effort to raise parent awareness in families whose children are still many years away from high school age may shape consciousness about the desirability of whatever school is planned. Strong energetic mobilization of effort from parents and educators committed to the school will be necessary.

***Different appeals needed for parents and for students.*** It should be noted that the marketing effort, particularly for those who might be part of the first or second entering classes, will have to appeal to both parents and students. In most families, the high school decision is one in which students and parents discuss and negotiate with one another. And, as is clear from the above analysis, students and parents may have different considerations in mind when they contemplate the high school years.

Before it opens, and in its early years, an appeal will also have to be targeted especially to those families where parents and students are willing to be pioneers and who see the advantages rather than the disadvantages to participating in the shaping of a new school.

After the establishment of the school, word-of-mouth marketing, particularly from student to student, will be very important. The school will quickly acquire a reputation which should make it the "in" place to go rather than being just another option for which the pros and cons have to be carefully balanced.

**What are the strategic issues to be considered in thinking about a new Jewish high school?**

***Yeshiva High School.*** It is important to ascertain what interests the Yeshiva leadership, staff and parents have, over the long term, in broadening their appeal to non-Orthodox families or in participating in a larger multi-track broad-band Jewish high school. Their views on these matters will clearly influence the direction that planning for a second high school will take.

***Community priorities and support.*** A number of people expressed doubt that the community would support or should support the expenditure of hard-to-come-by funds for this day high school endeavor. They note that there are other options for high school youth which might compete for dollars such as trips to Israel or expansion of Tichon Atlanta. The Federation position in relation to the formation of a second Jewish high school, at some point, needs to be fully discussed and clearly articulated.

***Feasibility.*** There are a number of issues in addition to the potential for adequate enrollment that should be considered when contemplating a new high school. These include the availability of high quality administrative and teaching staff both secular and Jewish, the availability of the financial resources needed for start-up, maintenance and scholarships, the requirements for accreditation by the state and other agencies, the

advantages and disadvantages of becoming a Solomon Schechter school, as well as consideration of contingency strategies for handling unexpected glitches and the transition to a functioning full service high school.

### Recommendations for next steps

Among the next steps which might be taken to move the planning process forward:

***Obtain accurate estimates of the size of the potential market.***

- the total number of Jewish children by age cohort
- the number of Jewish students currently at each of the major public and private middle and high schools. It appears that there are concentrations of Jews at the public schools of North Springs, Dunwoody, Riverwood, North Atlanta and Walton; and at private schools including Woodward, Paideia, Lovett, Westminster, Pace and Galloway.
- as much information as possible from these schools about their own population projections as well as anticipated expansions/changes over the next five years
- as much information as possible about the demographics and current school choices of Jewish families who now have 3-12 year old children.

***Do a market survey,*** perhaps with the membership of synagogues, the JCC, other Jewish organizations as well as with public, private and day school elementary=school parents, to get baseline numbers about parents' willingness to consider a Jewish high school for their children. The survey should include parents with young children as well as parents of students currently in elementary and middle schools. Data collected from a period of five recent years indicate that, on average, 25% of the students in the Jewish middle schools go on to Yeshiva High School. A market survey would permit more or less accurate extrapolations of class size, barring unforeseen events, for the next eight years.

Such a survey must be carefully constructed, however, so that it doesn't produce inflated numbers by painting an unrealistically glowing description of such a school, or too low numbers because people have not been adequately prepared to think about this particular school as a realistic alternative.

***Develop a long range plan including:***

- ***a feasibility study*** involving, most importantly, staff availability and then locations and facilities and accreditation requirements;
- ***a financial plan*** estimating start-up and maintenance costs under various staffing and enrollment conditions, along with scholarships;
- ***a preliminary school prospectus*** dealing with school philosophy, values, mission, climate, academic and Judaic curricular and extra curricular activities, additional school services such as special programs, counselling and advisement;
- ***an information and long range recruitment plan*** to raise the level of awareness of synagogues, JCCs and other organizations in this endeavor;
- ***a timeline*** for decision making and action.

**A final note**

The vision statement contained in the March 1992 Report, *Rethinking Jewish Education in Atlanta*, says:

Our dream is that throughout their lives, every Jewish person and family living in Atlanta will find ways to deepen their understanding and connection to their Jewish heritage. We would like their Judaism to infuse their thoughts and feelings and positively influence their behaviors at home and in the world.

We want the Atlanta Jewish community to provide attractive, affordable, accessible learning opportunities to people of all ages through an integrated system of Jewish educating institutions. We want good schools and programs for children program pre-school through college; and for families and adults.

The goal statement connected to this vision and relevant to the high school population under discussion here stated that the Atlanta community would:

Expand and increase the variety of programs for teens so that in the crucial years during which they develop their identities as adults they will have positive and sustaining Jewish educating experiences and strong positive affiliations with other Jews.

The Atlanta Jewish community has a great opportunity to create a unique educating system for all its families and to provide a model for other communities by inventing new ways in which 21st century American Jewish institutions can meet the needs of 21st century American Jews.

## Attachment A

### **PRELIMINARY MARKETING STUDY RESPONDENTS**

#### **Student focus groups**

Tichon Atlanta, all grades (8)  
Epstein, 6th and 7th graders (14)  
Hebrew Academy, 7th graders (18)  
Yeshiva High, all grades (15)

#### **Parent Focus Groups**

Epstein School (10)  
Hebrew Academy (12)  
Yeshiva High (6)  
Davis Academy (11)  
Private school parents (8)

#### **Individual interviews (28)**

Peter Aranson, Eliot Arnovitz, Rabbi Richard Baroff, Shelli Bank, Steve Berman, Gerald Cohen, Rabbi Herbert Cohen, Elizabeth Cohen, Cantor Scott Colbert, Robert Cook, Risa Davids, Rabbi Stanley Davids, Barbara Dukoff, Cheryl Finkel, Michal Hillman, Jonathan Imerman, Rabbi Robert Ishay, Rabbi Brett Isserow, Rabbi Mark Kunis, Rabbi Shalom Lewis, David Minkin, Rabbi Jay Neufeld, Rabbi Yossi New, Barbara Rosenblitt, David Sarnat, Bill Schatten, Steve Selig, Rabbi Harvey Winokur.

## Attachment B

### FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

(wording of questions and discussion topics  
modified to suit group)

Opening remarks: welcome, explanation of task, explanation of focus group, explanation about use of data, confidentiality, etc.

1. Introductions: Briefly tell your name, (for students: subjects that you like in school, subjects you dislike, your outside-school interests/activities, your Jewish background.) (For parents: where your children go to school, reasons for choice, Jewish background.)

2. When you think about high school what are some of the things that matter most to you about the school?

3. What are some of the things that concern you about high school?

4. What would you want in a Jewish high school?

5. What difference would it make to you if this school was just starting up or had existed for a long time?

6. In your family, who makes the decision about high school?



## Attachment C

### SAMPLES OF FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

#### Tichon Atlanta students - 8th, 9th, 10th graders in public and private schools

What's important about high school to you?

Friends

Teachers who make sense, treat you as a person, not teach just out of the book, not try to be totally superior

After-school activities: orchestra, band, football, drama club

School would be really boring without sports and clubs

Size of the school?

A real school atmosphere

A big school adds variety

Dating is hard with not too many Jews - five in my school

The bigger the school the more cliques there are

I like being known and being friendly with everyone in a small school

Small is better. But sometimes it's tough.

#### Epstein - 7th graders

Favorite subjects?

History, Bible, English, science, math

What high school are you thinking of?

Pace or a public school

North Atlanta or Yeshiva - neither is a good choice. I don't know people and I'm not used to public school and the Yeshiva is not co-ed.

I don't want to go to Yeshiva - long skirts. If there was a Jewish high school like

Epstein I would consider it. I'm going to Walton

North Atlanta - near home. I don't fit into an Orthodox format. I don't want Orthodox values.

North Springs - I know people there. I could wear shorts. Public environment would be better than Orthodox environment for me.

Thoughts about public/private/Yeshiva?

In public school I'd be worried about being bored, kids smoking, new people, no Bible classes.

I have a learning disability - I think I would be more understood in a private school

I wouldn't mind going to Yeshiva.

I've been raised in a Jewish household. I want my kids to be raised Jewish.

If I don't continue it, it will all go to waste and I'll forget it. Hebrew school kids don't know anything.

I want to keep my identity.

### Size?

A small school would be like a family but a larger high school has more possibilities for friends  
In big high school, more cliques and groups  
High school should be bigger than Epstein  
Big school is overwhelming - but if you don't fit in with one group you can find others  
We have band, drama, dancing, arts here. I want to keep that.  
I like small classes, individual attention.

Epstein - 6th graders

Favorite subjects: exploratories, arts, humanities, history, rotation, math

### This Jewish middle school?

Better here than in public school  
Big hassle to go to Hebrew school after school  
Bible, Jewish history, Hebrew are great classes  
I have a taste of what high school kids know  
I like to talk Hebrew.  
I like it here. It's good to get used to good habits.

### A good high school?

Important to meet other people.  
I'd like to work out a way to go to a small school and meet new people, too.  
I want a taste of what's out there.  
I want to do things to help people.  
I don't want my life to be all Jewish. I'd like to know other kids.  
I don't know any kids outside of Epstein. I don't know other kids on my block. If I went to public school I would know them. I'd like friends close by.

### Size and buildings?

Smart kids and good teachers are more important.  
I like a small school. I want to keep old friends and meet new people.  
I wouldn't mind whatever building it is.  
I want to meet new Jewish people as well as non-Jewish people  
I like Yeshiva. Orthodox community is attractive to me. I want to be traditional when I grow up.  
I like Jewish day school.

### Yeshiva High School?

Too Orthodox  
It's like a de-social school  
Dress code  
Too closed in.  
I want to learn more about Christianity. I drifted apart from my Christian friend.

Hebrew Academy students - 7th graders

### Plans for high school?

Public schools - probably 8-10: Riverside, Watson, Lakeside, Dunwiddie  
Private schools - probably 4-5: Woodward, Paideia, Westminster, Israel  
Yeshiva - probably 7

Wishes for high school?

- To wear and eat what you want
- New friends
- Old friends
- Fun - gym, cooking classes
- Exploratories
- Good teachers who understand you, are friends with you
- Extra curricular activities - sports, drama
- Science field trips
- Lots of electives
- Freedom and flexibility
- Other languages

How will you decide where to go?

- Talk to friends, family, neighborhood kids
- Go on tours of school
- Parents decide
- We will decide together

Yeshiva students

Why are you here?

- I went to public school after Epstein but missed values.
- I was in public school, was one of two Jews.
- Not my decision - parents said go. My grades were slipping. Glad I'm here.
- Torah Day school - this is the only environment that offers a religious setting.
- No where else to go

What do you think is the school's reputation?

- Too religious
- Name
- Orthodox
- No sports
- Not Co-ed
- Not social
- Strict dress code

What do you think are the facts?

- Not that religious, people of all backgrounds
- Everyone does sports
- Dress code.
  - If dress code were changed, they still wouldn't come
  - Dress code hides diversity.
  - Good: teaches Jewish values
  - Bad: seems unfamiliar
  - Uniforms would be better
- Co-ed for lunch and for some secular classes
- Social life
  - Has cliques - but so does public school
  - People in a grade are friends
  - This was most unfriendly school in my life
  - Bad thing about this school is that it's too small
  - Make it bigger

#### Jewishness?

People who are not Orthodox feel uncomfortable  
You're taught that this is the way it is  
Rabbis won't teach Conservative views  
Maybe if they got different rabbis - very sexist, very set in their ways  
The Orthodox religion is sexist  
It has to be religious or non-religious. It can't be both.  
To be Orthodox is to be a different religion

#### Academic program?

In public school, we had many labs.  
This is from one extreme to the other  
What they give in courses depends on the grade.  
Math - they don't have enough different levels.  
English - there is honors and non-honors, nothing in between which I need  
English has always been a disaster  
Not enough teachers  
We need more money for teachers  
They don't offer enough courses

#### Location and facilities?

We need bigger building  
Better location  
More teachers  
A wider variety of classes

#### Epstein Parents

#### What's important about a high school?

Quality education  
If I had to choose between facilities and peer group, I'd choose peer group.  
Strong academics.  
It must compete with other prep schools  
Process skills are very important than facts - critical thinking, research, computers  
Good teachers  
Academic excellence  
Honors program  
Options  
Extra-curricular activities  
Coalition of Essential schools model - analyze, think, superb teaching, integrated education  
I'm looking for Judaism.  
Ability to read and analyze texts  
Understand the tradition  
Intoxicating possibility - an intellectual approach to Judaism: identity and continuity become easy when the message is available to them  
Discuss feelings about Midrash  
Get a comfort level with Judaism  
By eighth grade, kids are just getting to the point of being able to use information.  
I don't want Yeshiva -- I want an intellectual rather than an emotional/religious model of Judaism.  
I want a moral and intellectual emphasis.

The school should emphasize intelligences in addition to academic – artistic, personal, emotional.

Jewish teachers who can be role models

I want a quality high school that provides for a range of kids. I don't want just the top 5%.

A new Jewish high school?

Religious education is important to us.

In other school, lack of sensitivity of Christian kids, emphasis on Christmas holidays.

I want safety and common values for my child.

When I was growing up, my public schools were Jewish. Here, you need to make an effort to be Jewish. I have a hard time sending my kids to high school with prayers before the football games

Day school is important. High school even more important.

Without facilities, kids would not want to go

We don't want to be pioneers - the first or second class.

Has to be large enough to provide a social life.

Kids want numbers.

I believe community at large won't make sacrifice.

My experience is that you don't need everything on a silver platter.

Possible model: 50% academic, 20% Judaic, Electives to make up difference

#### Hebrew Academy parents

Why day school?

Jewish education is important.

We are a traditional family.

We are committed to an Orthodox education. Afternoon schools are terrifying.

In Atlanta everyone is trying to make you a Christian. I don't want intermarriage

Ideas about high school?

I'm considering Woodward: sports and academics

My older kids went to Westminster - for pre-collegiate education

I would like to see an alternative to Yeshiva.

Probably Riverwood

Most important is having the best high school for the child.

Yeshiva may be being misperceived.

My children are at Yeshiva. They have Honors, strong secular program. Goal of school - to become a mensch and do well in studies. Teachers are terrific

Vision and wishes?

I believe in bottom line. We should poll families. Until we know there is a base, we are wasting our time

My vision. One big Jewish high school with a philosophy that appeals to all Jews. Broad secular education with an Honors program with a Jewish environment with elective tracks. Strong extra-curricular.

My vision: I don't want a Jewish prep school. I want a strong Jewish curriculum

Learning disabilities: should be included. My wish list would be to include all levels of capabilities.

Object should be to make it inclusive.

Pre-collegiate - we want excellence in education so our children will be able to compete in the real world.

### Size?

Affects content. The larger the institution the more variety.  
Parochial education usually falls short in sciences and language arts.

### Yeshiva parents

#### Reasons for sending children?

Decline at Riverwood  
We're Orthodox  
No question - it was next step.  
Caring, secular staff, small, college acceptance, positive atmosphere  
Lots of misinformation around but we took her to the Yeshiva graduation and it worked  
Good environment  
He was accepted at Pace. Had friends at Yeshiva. Visited open house  
and loved it

#### What has been your experience?

Some parents are afraid that their kids will be too Jewish rather than too worldly  
Sense of family, purpose -- "to be the very best they can"  
He is exposed to a type of Judaism like nowhere else - living the teaching.  
He felt accepted.  
My son plays lots of sports  
He gets an opportunity to challenge what's being taught.  
Kids are themselves, no embarrassment about who they are.  
Girls don't go out on dates. We're delighted  
High level of Jewish studies  
Small classes  
They deal with individual kids.  
She's exposed to things we can't teach her.  
We sent our child for the Judaics. She learned how to think. She learned how to live.

#### Why so many misperceptions?

Bad marketing  
Impact of Russian children - language problems, resource intensive  
Reputation as school for children with problems  
Perception that you have to be Orthodox to go  
Not enough people visit  
Community should start giving it attention.  
Yeshiva is best kept secret in Atlanta.  
Some things are negotiable: dress code, mixed secular classes

#### Another high school?

Yeshiva would suffer.  
Improve Yeshiva to attract other students.  
We should grow to 300 kids.  
Another school might be more social, attract more kids.

### Davis parents

#### Reasons for your school choice?

I was a public school parent, now I'm not. My son was the only Jew in school.  
I switched from public school. Academics was reason.

For me, Jewish was first, academics second. I want to know now, in kindergarten, the options for 7th grade.

We're going to send our child to public school for elementary, and to private high school - because of finances.

Public experience was disappointing. My child had no friends because of the transiency  
Too many kids in the class.

Riverwood did nothing to motivate my older ones, although they were happy

Woodward was good - lots of Jewish kids - but no Jewish education.

We're classical Reform. Wonderful to be Jewish but we don't know enough about it.

It's wonderful to go to school with kids who will be your friends for life.

My three older kids- we're not satisfied with the education any of them got.

Public schools are getting worse: redistricting, crowding, deterioration, staffing problems. Sometimes teachers can't spell.

You need to think about high school in first grade.

#### Yeshiva?

I want my child to have a Reform Jewish upbringing.

In a perfect world, Yeshiva should be able to make changes and meet needs of everyone.

Left to its own devices, Yeshiva could not attract many more non-Orthodox students.

Their Board makes all the decisions. Could not meet the needs of many Jews.

First step: see if Yeshiva could have more than one track

Even if Yeshiva agreed to do tracks, I could not send my children to a school where women were not equal.

#### Another Jewish high school?

There's a huge population that are looking: unaffiliated, non Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Their kids could begin their Jewish education in high school.

People want a good high school for their kids.

120 is too small. 300 is optimal

A Jewish high school needs community support.

In the established private schools, it is getting harder for Jewish children to get in --

They "balanced" their classrooms.

A large school has diversity. A little school has cliques.

#### Private school parents

#### Your current school choice?

I want her to face the real world as a Jewish woman

Ideal school needs multiple tracks.

I want plenty of math and science classes.

He wanted to go to private school. I didn't want Judaism to be the center of his rebellion

Woodward is accepting - doesn't schedule exams on holidays; 10% of kids are Jewish.

Tichon doesn't have academic depth.

Hebrew High good - treats all students at different levels of Judaism

#### A new Jewish high school?

Physical education is important at high school.

Teachers must be fabulous.

Whole community needs to invest in the school so we can accumulate the resources.

Decision would be a negotiation but kids lead the way.

The more we strengthen the day schools, the more we establish the links.

We could make this more Jewish academically than Tichon  
There is room for two schools in the community - furthest right of Orthodox will not  
ben.

I don't want my child penalized because she is a Reform Jew.

There's a perception that Yeshiva looks down on Reform Jews.

All role models at Yeshiva are Orthodox rabbis.

Competition will strengthen Yeshiva - will define their purpose, be good for  
community.

Yeshiva has liberalized.

An alternative high school would kill Yeshiva.

#### Judaic studies curriculum?

Prayer, Hebrew language, text based study

Jewish input into everything.

Integrated curriculum

General studies 50%, Judaic 20%, others elective

They should know answer to questions: why be Jewish, what is the Jewish sense of  
obligation? sense of community? pride? service?

They should be familiar with the Jewish intellectual tradition, historic perspective,  
current literature.

Know prayers and practice

Spirituality

Current issues through Jewish eyes

Prepare next generation for their adulthood living Jewish lives

They should learn from teachers who live it rather than just know it.

Kollel is wonderful resource.

Kids are looking for authenticity.

#### Size?

Small classes, 10-15, with personalized attention

I hate small schools.

You need diversity of curriculum - lots of kids. Minimum 500.

You need at least two classes per grade, 15 in class, 4 grades - 150-200 kids

#### Start-up class?

I would be depriving my child of academics that would not be there at start up.

My son wants a small school so start-up would be OK

Experimental program is exciting because of no limits. You learn from failures. To be  
part of forging a new school community is exciting.

To know everyone in school would be fine.

There would be additional pressure to supplement the school.





## Atlanta Jewish Federation

1753 Peachtree Road, Northeast/Atlanta, Georgia 30309/404-873-1661/FAX 404-874-7043

August 6, 1993

Mr. Gerald Horowitz  
President, Atlanta Jewish Federation  
3860 Northside Drive, NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Dear Jerry:

It is with great pleasure that I am reporting on the conclusion of the work of the Task Force on High School Education. In late Spring 1992, in response to interest expressed by a group of individuals in creating a second day high school, Federation President Perry Brickman agreed to assist us in exploring the feasibility of founding a new school. He asked me to convene the Task Force and Federation assisted us by providing us with staff support.

Following an early summer meeting with Dr. Jonathan Woocher of JESNA, during which he sensitized us to some of the issues involved and gave us some basic information, the Task Force set forth to do its work. A list of the members of the Task Force is attached.

During the summer of 1992, data was collected from the elementary level day schools in Atlanta in order to ascertain the rate of continuation of day school education at the high school level for those completing a day school education through sixth, seventh, or eighth grade at our area schools. Data from five academic years indicated that an average of 25% of those pupils completing their studies at the Hebrew Academy, the Epstein School, and Torah Day School, continued their studies at Yeshiva High School. There was also a very small number of Torah Day School graduates who continued their Jewish education outside the Atlanta area. The document summarizing this study is attached.

Also during the summer of 1992, staff began collecting information on Jewish day high schools outside the Atlanta area, focusing on academic program, student body composition and philosophy. After reviewing the material collected, a schedule was created to conduct school site visits, in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, suburban Washington, and Atlanta. Those schools visited were Orthodox, Conservative, or "Community" schools.

PRESIDENT—Gerald D. Horowitz • FIRST VICE PRESIDENT—David N. Minkin  
VICE PRESIDENTS—Jack N. Halpern, S. Stephen Selig III  
TREASURER—Mark Lichtenstein • ASSISTANT TREASURERS—Elliott Cohen, Jody Franco  
SECRETARY—Larry Joseph • ASSISTANT SECRETARIES—Candy A. Berman, Ann L. Davis  
CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN—Arnold B. Rubenstein, M.D. • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—David I. Sarnat

Letter to Mr. Gerald Horowitz  
August 6, 1993  
Page Two

As outlined in the attached "Report on Site Visits", the site visits clarified that there were many issues and considerations which will have to be addressed and resolved by any community group deciding to start a new school. The mission and philosophy of the school would form the basis for determining religious, curricular, and pedagogical issues. During the site visits, the primacy of an excellent general studies program in a successful high school was stressed, as was the need for a succinct philosophy. Also of paramount importance were text-based Judaic studies, the relevance of the Hebrew language program and the need to incorporate an Israel component into a high school. Other valuable information was collected regarding structure, academic standards, and more, and is available to any local group which may emerge to pursue to the creation of such a school.

Finally, the Task Force commissioned the attached preliminary marketing study conducted by Dr. Adrienne Bank of Los Angeles. The study involved focus groups and interviews with a total of 130 students, parents, educators, and community leaders. Their purpose was to find out if there was sufficient interest in a second Jewish high school in Atlanta to move forward with the discussion.

The conclusion of the study was that there is a substantial market for another kind of Jewish high school in Atlanta due to greater Atlanta's educational environment and the desire of non-Orthodox parents to have their children educated Jewishly.

Following a review of all its work, the Task Force developed the following findings and recommendations which we are reporting to you as Federation President:

1. It is imperative that Atlanta offer a viable day high school education for all Jewish children within our community, since children by high school age are not only more intellectually ready for a challenging Jewish education, but they are also more vulnerable to the influences of their peers and the environment.
2. Yeshiva High School serves a defined segment of our Jewish community, and a significant number of parents of high school children do not presently believe Yeshiva to be an acceptable alternative. Yeshiva has expressed an interest in considering institutional modifications which may broaden its appeal.

Letter to Mr. Gerald Horowitz  
August 6, 1993  
Page Three

3. No survey has been taken to identify more precisely the number of children who would attend a Jewish high school if an alternative other than Yeshiva were to be available; however, based upon the best information now available, the Task Force believes that there is demand in Atlanta for such an alternative.
4. The Task Force's work has been completed, and those parties interested in furthering the development of alternative Jewish high school education are encouraged to move forward and to draw upon the information developed by the Task Force.

It was a pleasure working on this effort and serving with such a dedicated and concerned committee.

Sincerely,

Eliot Arnovitz, Chair  
Task Force on High School Education

ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION

TASK FORCE ON HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Eliot Arnovitz, Chair

Steve Berman  
Elaine Blumenthal  
Ann Davis  
Jay Davis  
Cheryl Finkel  
Lynne Halpern  
Jonathan Imerman  
Larry Joseph  
Dianne Leader  
David Minkin  
Jeffrey Ram  
Michael Rosenzweig  
Jerry Siegel  
Jeffrey Snow  
Felicia Weber  
David Westerman

DATA ON HIGH SCHOOL CHOICES OF  
ELEMENTARY DAY SCHOOL GRADUATES

The following data is a tabulation of information provided by the three local elementary level day schools which have graduated students. The data covers five academic years: 1987-88 through 1991-92. In 1990-91, the Epstein School added an eighth grade class, and that year all of the sixteen students choosing to continue in day school after the seventh grade chose to remain at the Epstein School. In 1990-91, the Torah Day School graduated its first class, however, the following year there was no graduating class since an eighth grade class was added that year.

Torah Day School also indicated that three of its graduates from 1990-91 continued their high school education at Jewish schools outside the Atlanta area.

From year to year, the percentage of elementary day school graduates choosing to continue their day school education at Yeshiva High School ranged from 11% to 40%, with the average percentage being 25%, or one out of four students.

1987-88

Hebrew Academy:

Total completing 7th and 8th grade:	38
Total selecting YHS for 8th/9th:	11
Percentage selecting YHS:	29%

Epstein School:

Total completing 7th grade:	12
Total selecting YHS for 8th:	2
Percentage selecting YHS:	17%

Total for 1987-88:

Total graduates:	50
Total selecting YHS:	13
Percentage selecting YHS:	26%

1988-89

Hebrew Academy:

Total completing 7th and 8th grade:	62
Total selecting YHS for 8th/9th:	19
Percentage selecting YHS:	31%

Epstein School:

Total completing 7th grade:	15
Total selecting YHS for 8th:	3
Percentage selecting YHS:	20%

Total for 1988-89:

Total graduates:	77
Total selecting YHS:	22
Percentage selecting YHS:	29%

1989-90

Hebrew Academy:

Total completing 8th grade:	21
Total selecting YHS:	6
Percentage selecting YHS:	29%

Epstein School:

Total completing 6th and 7th grade:	9
Total selecting YHS:	6
Percentage selecting YHS:	67%

Total graduates:	30
Total selecting YHS:	12
Percentage selecting YHS:	40%

1990-91

Hebrew Academy:

Total completing 8th grade:	23
Total selecting YHS:	4
Percentage selecting YHS:	17%

Epstein School:

Total completing 7th grade:	26
Total selecting 8th at Epstein:	16
Total selecting YHS for 8th:	0
Percentage selecting YHS:	0%

Torah Day School:

Total completing 7th grade:	6
Total selecting YHS:	2
Percentage selecting YHS:	33%

Total graduates:	55
Total selecting YHS:	6
Percentage selecting YHS:	11%

1991-92

Hebrew Academy:

Total completing 8th grade:	25
Total selecting YHS:	8
Percentage selecting YHS:	32%

Epstein School:

Total completing 8th grade:	16
Total selecting YHS:	3
Percentage selecting YHS:	19%

Total graduates:	41
Total selecting YHS:	11
Percentage selecting YHS:	27%

GRAND TOTALS, ACADEMIC YEARS 1987-88 TO 1991-92:

Total graduates:	253
Total selecting YHS:	64
Percentage selecting YHS:	25%

## ATLANTA HIGH SCHOOL MODEL

Some principles:

David Blumenthal: (a)  $\frac{1}{2}$  time Jewish Studies.

(not model from S. Africa / Australia)

(b) Division of Jewish Studies

→ 13th day

Get kids out speaking Hebrew / French

(c) Strong Jewish History / Culture

(d) Strong Bible component

(e) Some Rabbinics

(f) Relationship to Israel. (center)

(g) Religious service — ritual

(h) — community service

D. Sarnat — Experimental center of lab. school

"lab. school" → (Wagner disagreed)

R. Wagner

(i) Admissions criteria — achievement  
— ability  
— Performance

(j) lateral entry.

Cheryl — Nursing + Get kids into Harvard.

— Non-traditional —



Michael Rosenzweig  
23 Northwood Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

HYI

Raman

June 8, 1994

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As you know, over the past couple of years there has been a great deal of discussion in the Atlanta Jewish community regarding the possibility of creating an alternative Jewish High School in Atlanta. We are writing now to update you on progress that has been made regarding this project and to solicit your views regarding a plan for moving forward.

Since the Federation Task Force chaired by Eliot Arnovitz completed its work, we have had numerous meetings with members of the Atlanta Jewish community who are interested in the High School project. We have also benefited from the advice and counsel of various educators and others interested in high school education, including Paul Bianchi (Head of Paideia School), Paul Flexner (Director of Placement, Community Day School Network, JESNA) and Rabbi Robert Abramson (Executive Director, Committee on Jewish Education, United Synagogue of America). We have counselled with rabbis and educators from our community, such as Arnold Goodman, Mark Zimmerman, Shalom Lewis, Judah Mintz, Donald Tam, David Blumenthal, Cheryl Finkel and Barbara Rosenblit, and have learned a great deal from talking with Carol Nemo about her experience in helping to create The Davis Academy. Finally, we have discussed the idea of an alternative Jewish High School with Harry Stern and Laura Dinerman, respectively the Executive Director and President of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center, who support this project and assure us that the AJCC would be pleased to provide us with office space until we have our own facility.

After assimilating all that we learned from these many meetings and conversations, we drafted a proposed Mission Statement for the new High School, which we enclose for your review. We have also determined that a logical next step for moving forward is to identify and recruit a dynamic individual with an established record of excellence and accomplishment in Jewish education, who would eventually be our Head of School. We would expect this individual to spend 18 months to two years prior to the opening of the School engaged principally in faculty recruitment and curriculum development and, secondarily, in fund raising. This individual would be the identifiable person in our community whose full professional attention would be devoted to

the creation of the School. In addition to the practical items already mentioned, we would look to such an individual to help us articulate and promote the School's philosophy to the community.

Based on our research, we should expect to pay an annual salary of \$100,000 or more for the calibre of professional we have in mind. We would also need support staff and an office. By our rough calculations, it appears that we will need seed money of approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 to cover two years' of anticipated expenses before the School is actually up and running.

We propose to begin immediately the solicitation of seed money from perhaps 50 to 60 individuals (including many of those receiving this letter). We would hope to present these individuals with a package consisting of our Mission Statement, a proposed budget, a letter explaining our plans (as outlined in this letter) and a statement that the project has the enthusiastic support of certain individuals, whose names we would list. We would expect, in short order, to create a not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation to receive and administer all funds contributed to the project, but initially we would accept contributions through the Endowment Fund of The Atlanta Jewish Federation. In that way, in the unlikely event that our project does not succeed, all funds contributed would be utilized for the enhancement of Jewish education in Atlanta.

We would very much like your views regarding the approach described above. In addition, we specifically solicit your permission to list your name as one who enthusiastically supports the creation of an alternative Jewish high school in Atlanta. Finally, if you know of others who might be interested in joining us in this exciting enterprise, please let us have their names. You may respond by calling any or all of us at the numbers listed below.

These are exciting times in Atlanta and we are all privileged to have the opportunity to play a significant role in the education of our children and the perpetuation of Jewish continuity. Please call us with your thoughts.

Sincerely,

---

Steve Berman  
320-7570 (o)  
252-2769 (h)

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Michael Rosenzweig  
420-4609 (o)  
881-6034 (h)

---

Felicia Weber  
843-8106 (h)

Michael Rosenzweig  
23 Northwood Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

June 8, 1994

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In November, you attended a meeting at the home of Felicia and Joe Weber to discuss the creation of an alternative Jewish High School in Atlanta. We are writing now to update you on progress we have made since the November meeting and to solicit your views regarding a plan for moving forward with the project.

Since the November meeting, we have had numerous meetings with members of the Atlanta Jewish community who are interested in the High School project. We have also benefited from the advice and counsel of various educators and others interested in high school education, including Paul Bianchi (Head of Paideia School), Paul Flexner (Director of Placement, Community Day School Network, JESNA) and Rabbi Robert Abramson (Executive Director, Committee on Jewish Education, United Synagogue of America). We have counselled with rabbis and educators from our community, such as Arnold Goodman, Mark Zimmerman, Shalom Lewis, Judah Mintz, Donald Tam, David Blumenthal, Cheryl Finkel and Barbara Rosenblit, and have learned a great deal from talking with Carol Nemo about her experience in helping to create The Davis Academy. Finally, we have discussed the idea of an alternative Jewish High School with Harry Stern and Laura Dinerman, respectively the Executive Director and President of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center, who support this project and assure us that the AJCC would be pleased to provide us with office space until we have our own facility.

After assimilating all that we learned from the November meeting and in these many subsequent meetings and conversations, we drafted a proposed Mission Statement for the new High School, which we enclose for your review. We have also determined that a logical next step for moving forward is to identify and recruit a dynamic individual with an established record of excellence and accomplishment in Jewish education, who would eventually be our Head of School. We would expect this individual to spend 18 months to two years prior to the opening of the School engaged principally in faculty recruitment and curriculum development and, secondarily, in fund raising. This individual would be the identifiable person in our community whose full professional

Page 2

attention would be devoted to the creation of the School. In addition to the practical items already mentioned, we would look to such an individual to help us articulate and promote the School's philosophy to the community.

Based on our research, we should expect to pay an annual salary of \$100,000 or more for the calibre of professional we have in mind. We would also need support staff and an office. By our rough calculations, it appears that we will need seed money of approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 to cover two years' of anticipated expenses before the School is actually up and running.

We propose to begin immediately the solicitation of seed money from perhaps 50 to 60 individuals (including many of those who attended the November meeting). We would hope to present these individuals with a package consisting of our Mission Statement, a proposed budget, a letter explaining our plans (as outlined in this letter) and a statement that the project has the enthusiastic support of certain individuals, whose names we would list. We would expect, in short order, to create a not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation to receive and administer all funds contributed to the project, but initially we would accept contributions through the Endowment Fund of The Atlanta Jewish Federation. In that way, in the unlikely event that our project does not succeed, all funds contributed would be utilized for the enhancement of Jewish education in Atlanta.

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---

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252-2769 (h)

---

Michael Rosenzweig  
420-4609 (o)  
881-6034 (h)

---

Felicia Weber  
843-8106 (h)

Michael Rosenzweig  
23 Northwood Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

June 24, 1994

Dr. Stanley Sloan  
Hay Management Consultants  
Building A, Suite 450  
5901 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30328

Dear Stan:

As you know, over the past couple of years there has been a great deal of discussion in the Atlanta Jewish community regarding the possibility of creating an alternative Jewish High School in Atlanta. We are writing now to update you on progress that has been made regarding this project and to solicit your views regarding a plan for moving forward.

Since the Federation Task Force chaired by Eliot Arnovitz completed its work, we have had numerous meetings with members of the Atlanta Jewish community who are interested in the High School project. We have also benefited from the advice and counsel of various educators and others interested in high school education, including Paul Bianchi (Head of Paideia School), Paul Flexner (Director of Placement, Community Day School Network, JESNA) and Rabbi Robert Abramson (Executive Director, Committee on Jewish Education, United Synagogue of America). We have counselled with rabbis and educators from our community, such as Arnold Goodman, Mark Zimmerman, Shalom Lewis, Judah Mintz, Donald Tam, David Blumenthal, Cheryl Finkel and Barbara Rosenblit, and have learned a great deal from talking with Carol Nemo about her experience in helping to create The Davis Academy. Finally, we have discussed the idea of an alternative Jewish High School with Harry Stern and Laura Dinerman, respectively the Executive Director and President of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center, who support this project and assure us that the AJCC would be pleased to provide us with office space until we have our own facility.

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Sincerely,

Steve Berman  
320-7570 (o)  
252-2769 (h)

Michael Rosenzweig  
420-4609 (o)  
881-6034 (h)

Felicia Weber  
843-8106 (h)





332-2646

## ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION

### M E M O R A N D U M

DAVID N. MINKIN  
*President*

S. STEPHEN SELIG III  
*First Vice President*

ANN L. DAVIS  
MARK LICHTENSTEIN  
*Vice Presidents*

ELLIOTT COHEN  
*Treasurer*

LARRY JOSEPH  
ARNOLD B. RUBENSTEIN, M.D.  
*Assistant Treasurers*

ROSANNE DIAMOND  
*Secretary*

TERRI F. BAGEN  
RALPH B. LEVY  
*Assistant Secretaries*

ELIOT M. ARNOVITZ  
*Campaign Chairman*

DAVID I. SARNAT  
*Executive Director*

TO: Alan Hoffmann, Executive Director

FROM: Steven Chervin, Michael Rosenzweig, Steve Berman,  
and Felicia Weber

DATE: December 12, 1994

We are very pleased that CIJE will be able to help the Atlanta Jewish community in planning for a new day high school. Specifically, we are looking forward to an all-day Goals Seminar on Sunday, February 12, in Atlanta. We plan to invite approximately 50 community representatives, including parents of potential students, as well as potential donors and several key rabbis and educators. Through word of mouth we have already generated a considerable amount of interest in the retreat. We expect to send out formal invitations during the week of December 12, giving us almost two months' lead time.

In preparation for a retreat on goals, we thought it would be helpful for us to articulate some of our goals and expectations for the retreat itself. Achieving these objectives will help us in our overall planning and implementation process, and in our efforts to articulate a set of common purposes. These are critical issues that we feel must be resolved in some fashion in order for us to move to the next stages of our process: developing a board structure, marketing the school, hiring a director, fund-raising, faculty hiring, site selection, etc.

We ask that you review this proposal and call us as soon as possible. We would like to schedule a conference call during which we can discuss the actual content of the retreat.

Our primary goal for the retreat is as follows:

**To clarify and define the school's religious ideology**

This issue has important policy implications, including answers to the following questions:

What should the school's overall goals be in terms of graduates' Judaic knowledge, skills, and

values? What elements of commitment and observance should students be expected to demonstrate? What capacities and traits of character and menschlichkeit should students be expected to exhibit? What will the philosophy of the curriculum be with respect to the different ideological/denominational approaches in Judaism? For example, will students learn both modern as well as traditional approaches to the Torah? Will all the different Jewish denominations be presented as legitimate and valid, or will some or one be given preference? What will be the school's approach to prayer? What type of prayer book will be used? Will the school be egalitarian with respect to gender, or will religious expectations differ for boys and girls? What will be the school's approach toward Israel? What role will community service and study in Israel play?

Though we welcome the participation of all members of the CIJE staff in the retreat, we want to emphasize again that we feel strongly that the success of the program will depend on your (Alan) taking a central role in the event. We hope to speak directly with you at your earliest convenience.

Because of the ground-breaking aspects of Atlanta's high school initiative, and the implications for other communities interested in establishing non-Orthodox day high schools, we hope that CIJE will be able to commit whatever resources it has to support our efforts. We believe that the success of this endeavor is central to the Atlanta Jewish community's status as a Lead Community. Indeed we view the establishment of non-Orthodox day high schools as one of the major missing links on the national continuity agenda; a successful and well-documented high school process in Atlanta will provide a promising model for other communities.



-2-

values? What elements of commitment and observance should students be expected to demonstrate? What capacities and traits of character and menschlichkeit should students be expected to exhibit? What will the philosophy of the curriculum be with respect to the different ideological/denominational approaches in Judaism? For example, will students learn both modern as well as traditional approaches to the Torah? Will all the different Jewish denominations be presented as legitimate and valid, or will some or one be given preference? What will be the school's approach to prayer? What type of prayer book will be used? Will the school be egalitarian with respect to gender, or will religious expectations differ for boys and girls? What will be the school's approach toward Israel? What role will community service and study in Israel play?

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— How will this be referenced from Atlanta Jewish  
—

FROM: "Dan Pekarsky", INTERNET:pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu  
TO: Alan, 73321,1220  
DATE: 12/27/94 10:37 AM

*Atlanta No*

Re: Atlanta

Sender: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu  
Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL by arl-img-2.compuserve.com (8.6.9/5.940406sam)  
id KAA26533; Tue, 27 Dec 1994 10:31:48 -0500  
Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7a); Tue, 27 Dec 94 17:31:45 +0200  
Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(128.104.30.18) (HUyMail-V7a);  
Tue, 27 Dec 94 17:30:15 +0200  
Received: from mail.soemadison.wisc.edu by wigate.nic.wisc.edu;  
Tue, 27 Dec 94 09:29 CDT  
Message-Id: <2F0032C0.CF87.0003.000@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>  
Date: Tue, 27 Dec 1994 09:17:00 -600  
From: "Dan Pekarsky" <pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu>  
Reply-To: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu  
Subject: Atlanta  
To: 73321.1221@CompuServe.Com  
CC: ALANHOF@vms.huji.ac.il  
X-Gateway: iGate, (WP Office) vers 4.04b - 1032  
MIME-Version: 1.0  
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; BOUNDARY=BoUnD\_8KcZuX86QvYVtGo2f0024e7

--BoUnD\_8KcZuX86QvYVtGo2f0024e7  
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; Charset=US-ASCII  
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7BIT

Dear Barry,

In preparation for your phone call (though it might not reach you til later), attached are a few notes that I drafted concerning the matters under discussion. They are, to say the least, under-developed but may be helpful. I look forward to talking with you.

Dan

--BoUnD\_8KcZuX86QvYVtGo2f0024e7  
Content-Type: APPLICATION/OCTET-STREAM; name="HLTZDC"  
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7BIT

PREPARING FOR HOLTZ CONVERSATION RE: COLMAN AND ATLANTA

#### 1. RE: COLMAN

In principle, I have no problem drafting a short piece. It would emphasize the following developments since the summer: 1. the development of a plan of action; 2. Consultation process (e.g., Gerstein); 3. beginning to work in Milwaukee and Atlanta.

Note, though, that the Committee expressed some concern relating to Community-vision -- a theme that we've essentially put

on the back-burner. How do you want to address this?

## 2. RE: ATLANTA

A. Overly ambitious agenda. Considering the range of players coming to this program, the agenda seems way too ambitious if they really think they're going to come away "defining" their goals concerning the varied matters mentioned in that letter. Or--is this the culmination of a process that's been going on for a while? We need to know what stage they're at, to plan intelligently. We also have to discourage them from thinking that creating goals is a one-shot event.

B. A saner agenda. A saner agenda would emphasize developing an understanding of what's involved in establishing a meaningful goals-agenda; getting the beginnings of clarity; and generating a process that will facilitate further progress -- both before and after the school opens. The program could include some of the following:

1. An exercise like the one done in Milwaukee which focuses on three matters: a. the vagueness of typical goals-statements and hence their relative emptiness; b. the way in which anchoring a goal in a vision clarifies it; c. what's involved in meaningfully (as distinct from symbolically) trying to implement it.
2. An exercise designed to give them a chance to think about goals along the lines ofSizer -- what would meaningful exhibitions look like. What would you like to see your graduates able to do in different arenas? Conceivably they could be broken down into small groups for this exercise and then report back to the whole with their suggestions, opening the matter up for discussion. These groups would then evolve into Task Forces that would function beyond the day's activities.
3. An activity or a presentation that talks about the need to create an institution that encourages ongoing reflection concerning the institution's goals, the way they are and are not embodied in the life of the school, evaluation, etc.
4. An exercise like the one done on the first day of the Jerusalem seminar that focuses on the typical goals-weaknesses found in educating institutions. (This exercise overlaps #1)

MEMO TO: Alan Hoffmann  
FROM: Daniel Pekarsky  
RE: Additional comments re: Atlanta

A couple of addenda, one very narrow, the other more general.

First, the narrow one. In the section of the proposal in which there is reference to categories around which sub-groups could be focused, the one entitled "Prayer" might more fruitfully be formulated as "Religious outlook and Practice".

Second, I am a bit nervous about getting prematurely locked into a conceptualization of the day based on the short conversation we had, and I hope that the discussion with Chervin doesn't do this. I say this in part because as I think through the exciting challenge of this day, other possibly fruitful ways of thinking about the day come to mind. As an example, perhaps when they are broken into sub-groups to work towards a statement of the group's "framing statement", they should be given a task that is more holistic and less specialized -- i.e., less focused on a particular area. Conceivably, the different sub-groups could be given the same task, and then their different findings could be compared. A second issue with respect to the day that needs to be given more thought to is whether we are trying to do too much in a single day and whether we need to be making some choices re: emphases.

In any event, Steve's and our own continuing reactions to this proposal should help us think through these matters. If I have additional thoughts, I'll send them along. Good luck with your meetings.

D.

## RETREAT EVALUATION

1. How successful do you think the retreat was in generating a vision of the school's Jewish character? Which of the discussions did you find most useful in meeting this goal? Which were not particularly useful?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did you learn during the retreat? What made this learning valuable to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What do you think are the three most important next steps to take in planning the new school?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In what activities do you want to participate (e.g., building vision, fund-raising, marketing & recruitment, site selection & facilities, personnel, etc.)
  - a. in a leadership role?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. in a supportive role?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE: this is a somewhat revised version of the fax-material sent to CIJE last night. I recommend that you use this draft rather than the first one. DP

MEMO TO: Alan Hoffmann  
FROM: Dan Pekarsky  
RE: First Draft of the Atlanta Seminar

I hope this proves helpful in your meetings today. Conceptually it feels okay to me, but I am a bit concerned about whether there's enough time to do justice to the parts. Conceivably, they should be starting on the afternoon's activities earlier than I have them scheduled; this would allow for a more relaxed and thoughtful opportunities to react to what each sub-group does and to try to arrive at a shared statement. On the other hand, this might mean doing away with, or truncating the Dewey/Greengberg session.

I am a little concerned about the fact that the day has two very distinct purposes, both of them quite delicate - one of them being forming a community of purpose and the other being to forge a share platform of sorts. The concern is not just that each of them considered singly is very ambitious; it is also that the attempt to develop consensus around certain issues might result in the discovery of significant disagreements about certain matters. It would be important to note - and even welcome - such an outcome at the beginning of the day, making it clear that the discovery of such disagreements will be an occasion for rich discussion of a kind that should animate the life of this institution. Arriving at closure on all significant matters cannot be made the sine qua non of a successful day!

In any case, I hope this proves helpful.

I'll look forward to speaking with you later today.

Dan

## THE ATLANTA SEMINAR

What follows is a sketch of the Feb. 12 program, based on internal CIJE deliberations growing out of conversations with Atlanta. The sketch should be understood as a draft, subject to revision in light of further reflection and feedback.

### BACKGROUND

As part of its effort to launch a Community Jewish High School, Atlanta believes it important to engage in serious reflection concerning the philosophy that will inform the new institution. The need is not at this stage to arrive at a comprehensive set of goals but to define a framework, or statement of purpose, that is clear enough to offer a measure of guidance in assessing candidates for the directorship of the new institution but also flexible enough to allow the new director in collaboration with relevant constituencies to shape the direction of the new institution.

With this in mind, a February 12 seminar has been organized designed to last from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. About 50 individuals are expected to attend, including a) some 35 to 40 individuals from among prospective parents (many of whose children now attend 3 local "feeder-institutions", b) 5 to 10 rabbis and educators, and c) one or more academics (Blumenthal). Since this is the first time these varied constituencies have been brought together in relation to this project, the seminar should be designed to foster a rudimentary sense of community as well as to make progress on the agenda defined in the first paragraph. CIJE has been asked by representatives of this project to help shape and guide the seminar with attention to these concerns.

### PURPOSES OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar should be designed to accomplish the following set of purposes:

1. to enhance the awareness of participants concerning the critical role that goals can and should play in guiding an institution's efforts at education, and what criteria goals must satisfy in order to fill this role adequately.
2. to help the participants arrive at a shared, general statement concerning the Jewish orientation and aspirations of the projected institution. It will be understood that this statement represents a first iteration, to be revisited and elaborated in further deliberations under the guidance of the school's first educational director. The statement should be concrete enough to offer some guidance in efforts to recruit the right individual to this position.

3. to use this occasion for shared learning and deliberation as an opportunity to foster a shared sense of purpose and excitement focused on the enterprise of launching the new school.

4. to convey to those present that while there are certain defining moments in the development of an institution's educational philosophy, thoughtful attention to goals and their relationship to practice must not be thought of as a one-shot affair. Ways must be found to institutionalize thoughtfulness concerning such matters in the ongoing life of an educational community. Indeed, this seminar could usefully be viewed as an effort to cultivate a culture that welcomes and encourages this kind of thoughtful reflection and dialogue among stake holders.

At a very concrete level, it is expected that participants will emerge from the day with a strong first draft of a statement of purpose and conceivably also with one or more committees charged with working over and refining some of its elements in the months to come.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE DAY

##### 9-10:30 INTRODUCTORY SESSION

The day will be introduced by the leadership of the new school and of CIJE. They will jointly sketch out the background, aims, and general structure of the seminar. (Whether opportunities for the participants to introduce themselves need to be provided at this stage is something we should discuss.)

With the help of a structured exercise that may include small group work, CIJE staff will focus the attention of participants on three critical points pertaining to goals: a) what it means for goals to be seriously represented and embodied in the life of an institution; b) the amenability of typical goals-statements to multiple interpretations and the consequent need to settle on an interpretation which "feels right" and is also concrete enough to offer guidance; c) the importance of anchoring goals in some conception or vision of the kind of person and community one is hoping to nurture, and the role such a vision plays in justifying, integrating, and interpreting the institution's educational goals.

##### 10:30-10:45 COFFEE BREAK

##### 10:45-12 THE POWER OF GUIDING VISIONS: TWO EXAMPLES

In this session we will consider two examples of the



ways in which having a guiding vision of what one hopes to cultivate can guide the educational process. a) The ways in which John Dewey's ideas were expressed in the life of the Dewey School will be discussed; b) Moshe Greenberg's vision of an educated Jew will be summarized, with attention to its educational implications for one who took this vision seriously.

12:00-12:45 LUNCH

This might be an opportunity for individuals representing different constituencies to meet informally.

12:45-1:15 ORIENTATION TO THE AFTERNOON'S WORK

In this session, a seminar leader will remind the group that its task is to emerge with a statement that expresses a first iteration of its general framework as applied to its Jewish mission. Prior to the seminar, a number of critical areas will have been identified; divisions like Hebrew, Prayer, Israel, Jewish Texts represent one way to identify these critical areas, but another categorization, one that is less fragmenting, might prove more helpful; careful thought needs to be given to this. In any event, the challenge ahead is to articulate a general statement in each of these domains that will reflect in a general sort of way the community's shared aspirations. Even and perhaps especially at this stage it may be important to encourage participants to think of its goals/aspirations in these areas in relation to the kinds of achievements, activities they hope graduates of the school will be able and disposed to participate in upon completion of their studies.

1:15-2:30 SMALL SUB-GROUPS MEET

To address this challenge, participants will be broken down into 3 or 4 groups, each of which will be charged with addressing one of these central themes and arriving at the following: a) a statement of the issues that need to be wrestled with; b) as background to an effort at self-definition, an articulation of a broad range of positions that might be taken with respect to the way this theme should (and should not) enter into the school's understanding of its mission; c) a general goals-statement that the sub-group believes will aptly reflect the spirit or outlook of the community developing the new school; conceivably, the sub-group could be asked to tentatively identify one or more kinds of performance or exhibition (a la Sizer) in which education in this area might reasonably culminate.

2:30-3 COFFEE BREAK

During the coffee-break, the findings of each group are typed up and xeroxed.

3-3:40 REVIEWING FINDINGS OF THE SUB-GROUPS

At the end of the break, the small groups reconvene to review the findings of the other groups and to develop some feedback. They should pay special attention to the question of whether they feel comfortable with each sub-group's general statement of purpose - and, if not, how they feel it could be revised so that they would feel more comfortable with it.

3:40-4 CONCLUDING THE DAY

This will be a chance to summarize where the group has gone in the course of the day. If a kind of shared sense of purpose has emerged, this would be the occasion to read a draft of a general statement of philosophical purpose that integrates what has emerged from the small sub-groups and the feedback sessions. (After the session is over, a more careful statement can be drafted and circulated to participants in order to elicit further reactions.)

If the seminar suggests areas of significant disagreement, or identifies areas of importance that have not been adequately discussed, this would be the occasion to highlight these matters and to invite thoughtful participation in the effort to work through them in the months ahead. It should be stressed that surfacing such concerns at this juncture should be regarded not as a setback but as an achievement.

Time permitting, a short questionnaire should be filled out prior to leaving, inviting feedback concerning the day and issues in need of attention.

## ATLANTA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL SEMINAR

### Goals and Educational Practice: Identifying some Challenges

Suppose that you have been asked to organize the educational experience of students in your school so that there is a real fighting chance of accomplishing the institution's principal educational purposes. Assume that you have also been told that although the institution does not want to invest more resources in the effort than is really necessary, you should not be worrying yourself at this stage about the availability of resources. With this in mind, jot down your initial thoughts concerning each of the following challenges. (Use the back of this sheet if necessary.)

1. Develop a practical approach to the child's education (you can assume you're dealing with high school-aged kids in your own community) that will produce facility with the Hebrew language.

*What kind of facility?*  
- Hebrew in nation - 3 weeks of school.

- Israel trip which related to curriculum

- Connection w texts

- Work in residence

- Hebrew Abc & Culture.

- Jew in Israel.

2. Develop an approach to the child's education that will foster a love of Israel and an appreciation for its importance to us as Jews.

- Bible Israel

BREAK-OUT GROUPS

Hebrew

Fac: M. Rosenzweig

Aranson  
Arogeti  
Goldman  
Hoffmann  
Imerman  
Robkin, *Gar/Suon*  
Rosenberg  
Wagner  
Weiss

Jewish Text

Fac: A. Kauss

Chervin  
Diamond  
Finkel  
Hillman  
Minkin  
Mintz  
Rothschild  
Siegel  
Weiser

Prayer &  
Religious Practice

Fac: S. Schatten

Aczel  
E. Arnovitz  
Dagi  
Davis  
Holtz  
Joseph  
Scheinfeld  
Schleicher  
Zimmerman

Prayer &  
Religious Practice

Fac: C. Nemo

D. Arnovitz  
Backer  
Bank  
Blumenthal  
Geller  
Krick  
Leff  
Lewis  
Plasker  
Sloan

History

Fac: F. Weber

G. Berman  
Frisch  
Galanti  
Goodman  
Greenberg  
Marom  
Minsk  
Sandalon  
B. Schatten  
Weinberg

Israel

Fac: S. Berman

Ames  
Davis  
Eisenband  
Feinman  
Fixelle  
Halpern  
Katz  
Pekarsky  
Riesman  
Singer

See Atlanta section on page 3

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January 3, 1995

Dear CIJE Colleagues:

Below you will find my effort to summarize where we are in the Goals Project and to look ahead, with special attention to the "building capacity" theme. In the back of my mind were questions posed by Alan and Barry concerning the kinds of people we should be recruiting to serve as coaches and resource people and the kind of preparation they will need. In considering these matters, I found that it was impossible to proceed without at least some, even if very crude, characterization of the nature of the work we imagine them doing -- something which requires, in turn, some reflection concerning our views on the nature of the change-process at the level of institutions. So....I ended up trying to say something concerning these various matters; and though the account is lacking in adequate depth and detail, I think it may help to move some of our thinking along (as much through the questions it may provoke and the omissions it suggests as through what it does say). Since I have not had the opportunity to see a hard copy of this draft, there are probably various errors (stylistic and other) for which I apologize in advance.

I welcome your feedback and am hopeful that this proves helpful in thinking together in Cleveland about the next stage of our work.

Dan Pekarsky

PS to Ginny Levi: Please make copies of this document for participants in our meeting on Thursday. If it's possible to get the document to participants prior to the meeting, this would be desirable. (If I can get my own copy on Wednesday around 4 pm - which is when I believe I will be meeting with Alan - I would be grateful. Than ks.

January 1995

## THE GOALS PROJECT'S "BUILDING CAPACITY" AGENDA

### BACKGROUND

The Goals Project Agenda. CIJE's Goals Project assumes that progress in Jewish education depends significantly (though by no means exclusively) on the ability of educating institutions to become clearer concerning their major educational goals and to use these goals as a tool for organizing and assessing their educational practices and policies. The challenge of the Goals Project is to encourage and actively support efforts in this direction.

Past, continuing, and projected activities. Against the background of work done in Israel under the auspices of the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew Project and serious discussions in the first part of 1994 between CIJE and the Mandel Institute concerning the direction of the Goals Project, the Goals Project launched its work with communities through a seminar in the summer of 1994 designed for lay and professional educational leaders from a number of communities in the United States. This seminar was designed to educate the participants concerning the important place of goals and vision in Jewish education and to encourage them to engage their local educating institutions back home in a process of becoming more thoughtful concerning their goals and the relationship between these goals and educational practice.

CIJE promised to support such local efforts by means of a series of seminars in the local communities aimed at key stakeholders in their educating institutions. It was assumed that the clientele for these seminars would be generated by these communities. It was also assumed that among institutions participating in these seminars, some would decide that the goals-agenda did not meet their needs; others would use the opportunities provided by these seminars to improve their educational efforts; and that from among the latter group of institutions a few would emerge as candidates for intensive work beyond the period of these local seminars. These institutions might become the nucleus of a kind of coalition of institutions seriously striving to be vision-driven.

Since the time of the 1994 Summer Seminar on Goals, all 3 of the major communities that were represented in Jerusalem have embarked on Goals-related efforts. In Baltimore, a set of seminars organized around goals is scheduled to be launched with a special program in the late spring. Moreover, a Baltimore institution that participated in the Jerusalem seminar reports that the seminar has catalyzed some fruitful efforts at self-improvement over the last

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several months. In Cleveland, a seminar organized around the theme of goals and led by Walter Ackerman has become a vehicle for bringing together key lay and professional leaders in the Jewish education from across the community for regular meetings. In addition, Rob Toren has been hard at work with his Drisha Project, which is designed to engage local educating communities (schools and congregations) in a serious self-improvement process in which issues pertaining to goals play a very prominent role. Finally, Cleveland's Agnon School has approached CIJE with a proposal for collaborative work around a goals-agenda, a proposal to which we have yet to respond. In Milwaukee, a four-session seminar on goals is scheduled to begin in February for a constituency that will include two Day Schools, the JCC, and possibly also one or more congregations.

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7ay  
Alongside these efforts, CIJE has agreed to organize an all-day seminar on goals in Atlanta for the key stakeholders of a new Hebrew High School that is now being developed there. There have also been conversation concerning Goals Project involvement with a number of JCC camps and possibly with one or more congregations (for example, in Baltimore) that seem particularly interesting.

The "building capacity" challenge. Based on its work to date, CIJE is well-equipped to develop and run the kinds of seminars that it will be holding in the months ahead. Such seminars have the promise of helping representatives of participating institutions become substantially more aware of the important role that goals ought to play - but usually do not - in guiding our efforts at Jewish education, as well as of stimulating a lot of reflection concerning the status of goals and vision in their own institutions. If successful, these seminars will also generate a serious desire on the part of at least some participating institutions do launch into a serious effort at self-improvement that takes the goals-issue to heart.

CIJE is, however, not yet adequately positioned to move the Goals Project agenda beyond the stage represented by this year's local seminars. If CIJE is to be able adequately to support the efforts of educating institutions to become substantially more goals-sensitive than they now are, it needs to do much in the way of building capacity in this area. Specifically, capacity needs to be built up in two areas: first, we need to develop more of the kind of knowledge and know-how that are necessary if serious educating institutions are to be adequately helped in their efforts to implement a goals-agenda. Second, since CIJE's core-staff cannot itself work with individual institutions around the country in any sustained way, there is a need to identify, recruit, and cultivate a cadre of resource-people who will be available to work with educating institutions.

So important and pressing is this matter of building capacity that it needs to be viewed as the Goals Project's pre-eminent

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challenge and priority in the months ahead. We must use the period between now and the fall of 1995 to become "tooled up" for the next stage of the Goals Project.

#### BUILDING CAPACITY: A SKETCH OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

Building our knowledge-base and know-how. With respect to the development of the right kind of knowledge-base and know-how, our strategy is fairly straight-forward. We are aware of the major literatures and resource-people in areas that concern the Goals Project agenda.

1. Within the orbit of Jewish education, we need to do what we can to continue working with and learning from the individuals associated with the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew project. Special attention needs to be paid to the "curricularization" of the "Educated Jew" ideals.
2. We need to learn what we can from other instructive efforts going on in Jewish education that are related to our agenda - for example, the project Isa Aron has undertaken (both its conceptualization and the experience to date).
3. As a staff, we need to fully digest and assess the relevance to our own work of the pertinent efforts in general education (and organizational development). This includes the work done under the auspices of the Coalition of Essential Schools and of the Accelerated Schools movement; it also includes the work of change-theorists like Michael Fullan, Peter Senge, and related literatures. In addition to studying the relevant literatures, we need to continue the process initiated in our recent conversation with Amy Gerstein (of the Essential Schools Coalition) of arranging meetings and/or seminars with key individuals representing different approaches to reform. The aim of meetings with such individuals will be not just to better understand their views but to encourage them to reflect with us concerning how their approaches might lend themselves to work in our arena.
4. Intellectual energy and time need to be given to the effort to pull together the results of the efforts described in #s 1 - 3, to integrate them into an approach that will be adequate to the training of resource-people and to the work they will need to be doing. As will be discussed below, our work to date already suggests quite a lot in this area; but there is reason to hope the process of learning described above will continue to refine our understandings and skills.



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Developing personnel. With respect to the other part of "capacity-building" - the part that concerns personnel, our plan of action, roughly speaking, is as follows:

1. to identify from 5 to 10 individuals who will be recruited and trained to serve as coaches/resource people to communities and institutions. (January, 1995)

2. to hold a one-to-two-day workshop in the late spring, probably right after Pesach, for these individuals, which will be used to "bring them up to speed" with the work of the Goals project - to initiate them into the project's concerns, universe of discourse, core-literature, and agenda. This workshop will be an opportunity for both CIJE and each of the individuals we've recruited to make an assessment of whether a continuing relationship is desirable; that is, in addition to educating the participants concerning the rudiments of the Goals Project, the workshop will also provide an opportunity to identify obvious mis-matches.

3. a week-long seminar for the same set of participants (CIJE staff and the resource-people) this coming summer, probably in July. At this seminar, the participants will have the opportunity to develop understandings and tools that will enable them to enter into working relationships with institutions as coaches/consultants.

It is anticipated that the seminar will include sustained day-long opportunities to meet with thoughtful representatives of approaches to educational reform which seem most closely related to our own efforts; opportunities to initiate participants into a CIJE approach that draws on these various approaches; opportunities to acquire a repertoire of strategies and skills that will be useful in working with institutions; opportunities to struggle with concrete cases that require decisions concerning the appropriateness of different strategies.

4. Precisely because the cadre of resource-people will be "out in the field" after the summer, it will prove important to have periodic follow-up seminars during the 1995-96 year. This will provide all of us with an opportunity to continue our learning. The next paragraph develops this point.

Building capacity through work with institutions. It is important not to draw a sharp distinction between "building capacity" and "work with institutions". In fact, one of the ways, and perhaps the most important way, in which our knowledge-base

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concerning such matters as goals, the change-process, the traits desired in the coaches/resource people who will work with institutions, etc. will expand is through the actual process of working with institutions. This, of course, will only happen if we do what we can do view and use our work with institutions as experiments from which there is a lot to learn. This in turn entails serious efforts to keep track of what happens in the institutions we work with. Note that this is not intended to suggest that we or our cadre of coaches will enter into work with institutions without substantial knowledge and know-how; but it is to acknowledge that there is much that remains to be learned, and that much of this learning can only arise out of work "in the trenches".

#### ARTICULATING AND ADDRESSING AN OBSTACLE TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CULTIVATION OF COACHES/RESOURCE PEOPLE WHO WILL WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS

"The problem." As already noted, our challenge this spring is to identify a cadre of coaches/resource people who, after a suitable initiation into the work, can carry forward the Goals Project agenda with educating institutions. But in order to identify the right kinds of coaches/resource people to work with institutions and in order to develop an adequate curriculum that will serve to initiate them into their work with institutions, we need to understand the nature of that work, and this, in turn, requires us to have an understanding of the ways in which fruitful change in educating institutions can be catalyzed and guided. Unfortunately (and as evidenced by our insistence that our effort to build capacity this spring needs to focus heavily on the development of understanding and know-how), we don't yet have as much knowledge in these areas as we need. In view of this, it would thus seem that an attempt in the near future to identify coaches/resource people and to develop a curriculum for them is a good example of "putting the cart before the horse."

Putting "the problem" in perspective. There is, it is true, a measure of truth in this characterization of our situation and in the objection that it implies; and certainly it would be better if we had a clearer theory than we now do of the conditions of institutional change and the ways in which coaches/resource people can contribute to it. But the objection is not decisive; and the reason that it is not decisive is that we have in fact been developing considerable lore concerning the work to be done with institutions. This lore falls way short of a full-fledged "theory" or "approach", but it includes significant familiarity with the approaches identified with different reform movements, as well as a number of fundamental beliefs that are jointly sufficient to guide us in selecting coaches/resource people and in developing

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fruitful working-relationships with institutions -- relationships that will both benefit them and offer us opportunities to deepen our own understandings of the work at hand. The critical point is to organize our efforts in such a way as to maximize our learning and to feed it back into our work.

I want, in this connection, to stress that we do not need to feel any embarrassment concerning the fact that we don't have a full-fledged theory or approach to guide our efforts. In point of fact, it is far from clear that anyone has an adequate theory or approach to the kind of work at the level of institutions that we want to encourage. If, for example, we look at the most prominent movements (like the Essential Schools Coalition), we discover that: a) studies of their efforts show very mixed results; b) the approaches associated with such movements are themselves fluid and evolving; and c) these approaches are in many ways very open-ended and depend on a whole lot of "seat-of-the-pants" intuition on the part of the participants.

This said, I want to illustrate the claim made above that we already have a quite a few ideas concerning the nature of institutional change process in which we would like to engage institutions. I will do so by summarizing some of these points. Then, in the concluding section, I will speak briefly about some of the implications of these ideas for the identification and cultivation of coaches/resource people to work with our project.

#### SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN OUR WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS

As just suggested, in this section I identify some of the basic assumptions that can guide our work. I have not attempted to develop an exhaustive list of assumptions but to articulate enough of them to offer some guidance in thinking about identifying and cultivating a cadre of coaches/resource people for the work ahead. Some of these assumptions have been explicit or implicit in our conversations; in some cases I go beyond these conversations, drawing on insights gleaned from other arenas. These assumptions are tentative in two senses: first, they may be revised or withdrawn based on our own conversations; second, even if they "pass muster" among ourselves right now, they may need to be dropped or revised in light of experience. And, as noted above, even if reasonable, this list of assumptions will need spelling out and augmentation. In any event, here is the list:

1. Under the best circumstances fundamental change is difficult to achieve and cannot be guaranteed in advance; but there will not even be "a fighting chance" unless an institution's key stakeholders and a substantial element in its core constituency are committed to the effort.

2. The identification of compelling educational goals, as

well as serious efforts to organize practice in their light and to assess these efforts at regular intervals, must play a prominent role in the process of institutional self-renewal. ✓

3. As part of its efforts to clarify the goals and the vision that are to inform its work, the major stakeholders of a Jewish educating institution should unearth and struggle to give voice to their own most heart-felt convictions; but the process should also include a serious opportunity to encounter and struggle with other visions of a meaningful Jewish existence, for example, those emerging from the Educated Jew project and from denominational ideologies. ✓

4. Institutions that enter into the CIJE goals-process will undertake a careful survey of what they are presently doing: special attention will focus on the identification of the institution's avowed goals and how they are and are not expressed - and with what effect - in the life of the institution.

5. To suggest that thoughtful attention to goals needs to be at the heart of the process of change in Jewish education is not intended to imply that the process of improvement necessarily begins with a "visioning-activity" or any other institution-wide effort to articulate underlying goals. On the contrary, there are many possible roads an institution might travel in its efforts to clarify and better achieve its fundamental goals. Which road to travel depend on an array of local circumstances that need to be assessed on a case by case basis. A measure of intuition and eclecticism, informed by a thoughtful survey of the situation at hand and an awareness of a range of possible strategies for "cutting into" the situation, is indispensable to the enterprise. The appropriate plan should be determined after careful deliberation by the institution in collaboration with CIJE staff. ✓

6. In order to enter into a partnership with CIJE around a goals-agenda, an institution will need to identify a team of key stakeholders who will be responsible for overseeing and guiding the institutional process. The institution will need to make it financially and otherwise possible for this team to participate in periodic and sometimes extended seminars and workshops organized by CIJE for teams of institutional representatives. Opportunities for such teams to meet on-site with teams representing other institutions for purposes of give-and-take consultations will also be provided.

7. When CIJE agrees to work with an institution, it will appoint a coach identified and trained by CIJE to serve as a consultant to the institution and as a liaison to CIJE. The job of the coach will be to help the institution to identify and keep focused on central questions, to encourage appropriate forms of study and self-study, to identify and to help in deciding among and implementing strategies for advancing the reform-agenda, to access appropriate CIJE-resources, and to encourage periodic self-assessment.

In addition to the initial training provided by CIJE, coaches will participate in periodic seminars and workshops in which they will continue their learning and will share what they are learning in the field with their colleagues and with CIJE.

8. The coach and the institutional team will have shared responsibility for keeping and sharing with CIJE a record of its efforts.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND CULTIVATION OF COACHES/RESOURCE PEOPLE

Based on the foregoing, we can begin to identify the kinds of individuals who would make good institutional coaches. For example, a) such individuals would need to have a familiarity with a variety of subject-matters ranging from the Educated Jew Project to different approaches to institutional reform; b) they would need to have at their finger-tips a number of different strategies that, at different stages, might be used by an institution to forward and to assess its efforts; c) they would need to have an in-depth grasp of the role of vision and goals in the process of education and of ways to work towards strong coherence between goals and practice; d) and they would need to have a solid grasp of the kinds of goals that are likely to figure prominently in Jewish education and of competing interpretations of these goals. But such skills and understandings, while important, will prove no substitute for the savvy and thoughtfulness needed to size up a situation and arrive at a judgment concerning what is needed at a particular juncture, or for the interpersonal skills needed to develop fruitful working relationships with the diverse stakeholders that make up an institution.

Some of the characteristics identified in the preceding paragraph can be nurtured through seminars, workshops, and other CIJE-sponsored initiatives; but others, and particularly those that pick out traits of character - savvy, thoughtfulness, good judgment even under pressure, and interpersonal skills, may well be beyond our capacity to cultivate. In looking for appropriate individuals for the work of the Goals Project, we need to seek out individuals

From: Daniel Pekarsky at 602-233-4044  
To: Levi at 1-216-391-5430

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who already seem to have these characteristics.

#### CONCLUSION

Time permitting it would be possible to go on to do two very important things: first, to offer a fuller characterization of what adequate coaches would look like; and second, to more fully discuss the implications of the foregoing analysis of the organization of the projected summer-seminar. Such matters will, however, need to be deferred

**Atlanta Jewish High School  
Statement of Mission and Philosophy**

The Atlanta Jewish High School will be an independent Jewish community day school that will integrate intensive Jewish studies with a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory program. The school's central mission will be to provide an educational environment in which students can explore and practice the richness of their American and Jewish traditions, thereby creating a dynamic community of educated Jews who will help ensure the continued vitality of the Jewish people and Judaism.

The school will strive to nurture social, intellectual and ethical development, along with a commitment to Jewish community and Jewish values based on love of God, Torah and Israel. All Jewish children who academically qualify -- whatever their religious orientation or affiliation -- will together study their common Jewish heritage, learning respect for diversity while strengthening the Jewish identification of every student.

In both Jewish and secular studies, the school will maintain a flexible approach to curriculum, embracing both proven and innovative educational methods. The school's goal will be to graduate young persons having facility and familiarity with English and Hebrew language and literature, the basic texts of the Jewish and secular Western traditions, and the body of knowledge and experience required for constructive participation in democratic society and in Jewish religious and communal life.



**THE EPSTEIN SCHOOL**  
Solomon Schechter School of Atlanta

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*Cheryl R. Finkel*  
Head of School

Memorandum

TO: Steve Berman, Steve Chervin, Michael Rosenzweig, David Sarnat,  
Felicia Weber

FROM: Cheryl Finkel *CRF*

DATE: January 5, 1995

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Alisa Kurshan gave me permission to circulate this paper, which I knew would interest you. She cautions that the paper does not address the crucial phase of headmaster selection and the actual opening of their new Long Island Conservative high school in September 1994 with a class of 31 ninth graders. The other caveat is that the paper underplays the vital role Alisa herself performed in making this process successful. She is a Jewish educator who served as a committed lay leader. She also chaired the headmaster search committee. Alisa can be reached at (516) 271-2921.

cc: Dr. Alan Hoffman



THE APPLAUSE HEARD THROUGHOUT LONG ISLAND:

THE CREATION OF THE  
SOLOMON SCHECHTER HIGH SCHOOL  
OF LONG ISLAND

SUBMITTED BY

ALISA RUBIN KURSHAN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE MASTERS DEGREE IN JEWISH EDUCATION

AT THE

JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

MARCH 1, 1994

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

At the June 1992 commencement exercises of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, Mr. William Spielman was introduced as the new president of the school by Mr. Harry Brockstein, a founder and longtime board member of the school. During his introduction, Mr. Brockstein bemoaned the fact that there was no Conservative Jewish High School on Long Island, and expressed the hope that by the following year, there would be plans in place for the opening of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island.

Hearing the school leadership express this thought was nothing new to parents of the school. For years there had been a lament that there was no Conservative Jewish High School which graduates of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County could attend. But agreement with this position was usually confined to a very limited segment of the parent body of the Solomon Schechter community. Most parents, while they valued the Jewish education that their children had received,

were quite happy to have their children attend their local public high schools. After all, many of these communities boast of having some of the best public high schools in the country.<sup>1</sup>

And yet, during this graduation ceremony, something startling occurred. After Harry Brockstein commented on the need to embark on a plan to create a Solomon Schechter High School, the reaction of the crowd of approximately 500 guests, parents, teachers, alumni and students took everyone by surprise: a spontaneous eruption of applause turned into a five minute standing ovation. Everyone in that room was stunned by the intensity and unanimity of the response. Board members and parents alike talked throughout the reception and for days afterwards about what had transpired.

The members of the school's Board of Directors decided that the creation of a Solomon Schechter High School on Long Island was an issue that had to become their priority.<sup>2</sup> The parents who were insistent on realizing this dream could not be ignored any longer. It was clear that there was no

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<sup>1</sup>These communities include: Roslyn, Wheatley, Syosset and Port Washington school districts. Newsday rates public school districts in Long Island semi-annually. See Newsday's Long Island Help Book, published October 12, 1991 p.48.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, July 1992.

stopping the momentum which had been generated.

Approximately one month after the graduation exercises, Mr. Spielman appointed a committee to comb Long Island for suitable sites to rent in order to solve the overcrowding at the current school site and to establish a high school. The process of the creation of a Solomon Schechter High School on Long Island had begun.

What were the factors which led to such a spontaneous outpouring of emotion? Why were so many people swept up in the excitement of the moment when they had not been previously committed to a Jewish High School? A close look at the history of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County and the dynamics of the Conservative Jewish community on Long Island illuminate some of the relevant factors. This paper will attempt to describe these factors, place them in a useful theoretical framework, and analyze the confluence of events which facilitated the creation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORY OF THE SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL OF NASSAU COUNTY

The Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau county was founded in 1968. It began as a fledgling school in two classrooms at the Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation and moved from there to Temple Beth Sholom, in Roslyn Heights, N.Y. where it remained for four years. The school moved to its own building on Barbara Lane in Jericho in 1976 when it leased an elementary school building from the Jericho school district. At the time, the building was far larger than the school required, but it was hoped that the student population would grow and eventually fill each classroom. The building had been built to serve a maximum of 280 students.

#### EARLY ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE FACILITY'S OVERCROWDING

By September 1990, there were 380 students in the

building, far beyond its comfortable capacity. Since everyone agreed that the site was ideally located for the Long Island Jewish community, and easily accessible from major highways, the Board of Directors discussed the possibility of buying the property from the Jericho school district and expanding the facility. When several board members inquired about the feasibility of such a plan, they were persuaded that the plan would be too risky. According to the Jericho school district's regulations, once the school would petition the district to purchase the property, the district would be compelled to put the property on the market, would accept only closed bids, and the property would be sold to the highest bidder. The school could easily lose out to a developer or another private school, and then the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau would have no building at all.

A committee was established to begin to look at alternate sites. In the meantime, pressure was building to admit more students. There was a long waiting list of potential students for kindergarten and first grades. The school purchased four portable classrooms, converted offices into classrooms, and made closets into offices so that in 1992-93, there were 425 students packed into the building. Everyone in the community knew this was a short term solution at best.

Concurrent with the explosive growth in the lower grades,



there were several parents of upper school parents who were unhappy that their children would have to leave the comfortable, secure setting of the Solomon Schechter Day School and choose among several less desirable options. They were parents who were extremely satisfied with the quality of the education which their children were receiving at Solomon Schechter, and wanted to extend the school by a year at a time to form a high school. The parents had always been told that there was no more classroom space available to expand the school to include a ninth grade and that there were not yet enough seriously interested students to establish a viable high school.

Yet, when there seemed to be a large number of committed parents of students in the class of '92, (an exceptionally bright, and Jewishly committed group of students) who voiced their unhappiness at several board meetings when their children were only in the seventh grade, the Board of Directors decided to consider the option more seriously.

#### **EARLY ATTEMPTS TO BEGIN A SOLOMON SCHECHTER HIGH SCHOOL**

In October 1990, the Board of Directors had established a committee to explore the feasibility of working with the other Solomon Schechter Day Schools in the region to create a

high school. Many hours of effort were expended, and meetings took place to try to galvanize support among the lay, rabbinic and school leadership. The committee sought a suitable site and found one in Mineola. The committee, which consisted of representatives of Solomon Schechter of Nassau, Brandeis School, and the Solomon Schechter of Queens, asked each school to commit \$25,000 as seed money for the school's formation.<sup>3</sup> Although there were no representatives of the Solomon Schechter of Suffolk School included in the deliberations, the Board of the Suffolk school was asked to contribute \$25,000.

The committee, however, failed to win support for its efforts and gain a consensus. There were many reasons for this failure: chiefly, because the committee never went beyond finding a building. Many of the its members erroneously thought that once the building was found, all else would fall into place. The committee members were never able to expand the circle of enthusiasts. Parents from eastern Nassau County thought Mineola was too far away and that the building was located in a terrible neighborhood. Lay people asserted that the rabbis were not supportive enough as evinced by their failure to raise funds. The rabbis were frustrated because the lay people only came to them for help in raising money and did

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<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, December, 1990.

not tap them for their perspective on the issues facing the Jewish community.<sup>4</sup> Principals of the various Schechter schools were similarly ignored. They were not tapped for their expertise in Jewish education.<sup>5</sup> The project was abandoned within six weeks after the building was found.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the aborted project created bitter feelings which lingered among the diverse factions.

#### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NASSAU AND SUFFOLK SCHECHTER SCHOOLS

In particular, the parent body of the Suffolk Solomon Schechter School felt slighted. They felt hurt and angry that they were shut out of the process altogether. The leadership of the Nassau school had never made its peace with the establishment of the Suffolk school. Although by any objective reckoning, there were enough students for both schools to prosper, the president of the Solomon Schechter School of Nassau County was enraged that the national Solomon Schechter

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<sup>4</sup>Rabbi Neil Kurshan of Huntington, N.Y., then President of Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly, interview by author, September 1, 1993.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Dickstein, interview by author, October 19, 1993, Jericho, N.Y.

<sup>6</sup>This six week period spanned December 1990 through January 1991.

Association had allowed another Schechter school to be established so close in proximity to the Nassau school.<sup>7</sup> He petitioned the National Solomon Schechter Association to have them agree to move further east on Long Island.<sup>8</sup> As the years passed and the enrollment of both schools continued to increase, the acrimony dissipated but never fully disappeared.

The attempt to secure the Mineola site only exacerbated the already strained relationship which existed between the two schools. Further, the president of the Nassau Solomon Schechter thwarted all attempts by the Board of Education, the principal, and the Parents' Association of the Nassau school to plan joint events between the two schools. He was, by all objective standards, a very successful president. During his tenure the student body had doubled in size. The faculty, which had been primarily part-time staff, were now almost all

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<sup>7</sup> The Suffolk Schechter rents space from the Suffolk YM&YWHHA which is situated in Commack, N.Y. There are only fifteen miles separating the two sites. More important, the Nassau school traditionally drew large numbers from the Huntington and Dix Hills communities. Commack is closer to those communities than Jericho. The president and other board members were worried that the new school would siphon off many valuable families from western Suffolk and eastern Nassau. They argued that if the Suffolk Schechter was being established to serve the communities that were too far east to be accessible to Jericho (such as Port Jefferson), then the school should be situated further east.

<sup>8</sup>Rabbi Robert Abramson, Director of Education, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, interview by author, telephone, December 16, 1993.

full-time teachers. Perhaps most important, he had engaged a principal who had provided the school with much needed stability, leadership and growth.<sup>9</sup>

Another site became available towards the end of his tenure in 1991. The Chiropractic College, a magnificent property on the North Shore of Long Island in Greenvale, N.Y., was for sale. The president received a pledge of seven million dollars from a donor to the school who asked that he/she remain anonymous. Parents were so suspicious of the President, that they did not believe there was a real donor. As a result of the polarization between the president and the parents, the building was rejected by a majority vote by the school's parents, without considering the intrinsic merits of the site.

#### CHANGE IN POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE NASSAU SCHOOL

In the ensuing years, several events changed the political climate within the Schechter community in Nassau County. In May 1992, there was a change in lay leadership. The president of the school stepped down after a nine year term. When the new president assumed his position, one of his first goals was to "however quietly, bury the hatchet with the

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<sup>9</sup>Mr. Philip Dickstein was hired in 1985 and remains the school's principal.

Suffolk school."<sup>10</sup> During the 1992-93 academic year, the two schools competed against one another in several basketball games, and joined together for a Tu B'Shvat Seder and a Purim dance.

Another priority of the new president of Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County was to invite more parental involvement in the decision making process. An affable man by nature, Mr. Spielman began to call many parents to ask what they wanted from the school. He also conducted a series of evening teas in various geographical areas to engage parents in discussing his vision for the school. Even if no tangible results flowed from these inclusionary tactics, they helped foster a new atmosphere in the school.

There was also a major change in the relationship between the lay leadership and the principal of the school. The former president's philosophy of working with professionals was confrontational. He did not, by his own admission, ever develop a close working relationship with the principal of the school.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Bill Spielman, interview by author, Jericho, N.Y. August 25, 1993.

<sup>11</sup>Steven Wolnek, interview by author, Jericho, N.Y. December 16, 1994.

Mr. Spielman's style of leadership was just the opposite. He sought ways to include the principal in the decision making process and to make him feel appreciated at all times. All of these changes brought about a new climate within the board and the school at large.

Mr. Spielman's main priority was to solve the space problem in the school. Within two weeks of the watershed applause episode at the 1992 commencement ceremonies, a potential site was identified. Dealing with the possibility of acquiring this site would prove to be a most painful, yet ultimately positive chapter in the life of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau.

#### ST. PAUL'S ACADEMY

The former St. Paul's Academy in Garden City, New York was an enormous gothic structure that had space for everything the Solomon Schechter Day School needed. It included ninety classrooms, a swimming pool, dormitories, two gyms, a large library, laboratories, and several acres of sport fields. Many visitors to the site claimed it reminded them of the setting of the then popular movie, "Dead Poet's Society." There were, however, many problems with the

location. Garden City had no indigenous Jewish community. The site was so far west on Long Island that it automatically disenfranchised all potential students from Suffolk County and some of the eastern parts of Nassau County.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the administration and board of the Brandeis School expressed concern that a Garden City location might attract families who would otherwise have enrolled in Brandeis.<sup>13</sup>

The school would have cost the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County at least seven million dollars to purchase and renovate. Parents of more modest means, who tend to live further east from the current site in Jericho, were all convinced that tuition would skyrocket despite assurances to the contrary from the leadership of the school. Garden City was convenient primarily to the wealthier Nassau families who lived in Roslyn and Old Westbury.

Many board members felt that acquiring this site offered the best chance for the school to solve its problems. However, there was a great deal of bitter in-fighting on the issues mentioned above. In fact, the most passionate aspect of

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<sup>12</sup> State law provides free busing for all students if the school is within fifteen miles of the students' homes. Suffolk County and eastern Nassau County were beyond the fifteen mile limit.

<sup>13</sup> Sol Turk, Principal of the Brandeis School, interview by author, Baldwin, N.Y. June 20, 1993.



the debate was about the soul of the school. Would the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County become a fancy private school serving only the wealthy Jews of the North Shore of Long Island, or would it continue to be a quality Jewish Day school serving a broad cross section of the Conservative Jewish community living on Long Island?

Ultimately, the St. Paul's trustees decided to keep the property and not sell it. The discussion had been a healthy, albeit painful one, for the Solomon Schechter Day School community. For the first time parents felt that the board had listened to their concerns and the Board appreciated that parents had legitimate concerns and valuable suggestions. The channels of communication were opened. More parents were put on the Board, and relations between the Board and the parents became much less adversarial. It was in this much healthier atmosphere that another building was found.

#### THE EAST STREET SCHOOL

One of these new parents on the Board, Mr. Jack Rubin, quietly and without the fanfare of the previous search attempts, sent a letter to every school district in Nassau

County asking if any buildings were available for lease.<sup>14</sup> In October, 1992, he received a call from the Hicksville School District. One of their buildings, the East Street School, would be available for lease in August, 1993. The East Street School was just 1.4 miles from the current site in Jericho. Excitement built almost immediately. The location was perfect; the rent was affordable; the condition of the building was excellent; and the space was large enough to begin a high school in addition to moving the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades to the building.

The initiation of a smooth process within the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County community to acquire a second site was unprecedented. There were no parents who were publicly against the move. By January, the new contract was in place. A great deal of work would have to be done to iron out the logistics of moving almost half the school, but there was no controversy surrounding the plan and the vote was carried almost unanimously at the January open school meeting. It was now time to concentrate on achieving a second goal: the creation of a Solomon Schechter High School on Long Island.

In February, 1993, Bill Spielman called his good friend

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<sup>14</sup> Jack Rubin, now Executive Vice-President of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, interview, Huntington, N.Y., September 1, 1993.

and longtime board member, Mrs. Beth Ostrow, and invited her to chair the High School Committee. (Beth had a co-chair who served only a brief period, and who was replaced after two months by Rabbi Howard Stecker.)<sup>15</sup> Thus began the process of the formation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. Why did this committee form with little controversy? What were the forces at work both within and without the Solomon Schechter community which created the sympathy and interest in such an endeavor? A careful analysis of the critical success factors reveals a great deal about the genesis of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island.

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<sup>15</sup>Rabbi Stecker has continued to co-chair the steering committee but has not had the visibility of Mrs. Ostrow.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

#### EXTERNAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

When Bill Spielman presented his vision for the creation of a Solomon Schechter High School to the Board of Trustees in March, 1993, most members of the Board were convinced that there was parental support for the formation of a high school.<sup>16</sup> At Board of Education meetings during the entire 1991-1992 academic year, parents were constantly lamenting that public school was not a suitable answer for their high school age children. The local Orthodox yeshiva, Hebrew Academy of Nassau County (HANC), had been moving ideologically to the right each year, and a decreasing number

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Board of Directors March 30, 1993 and conversations with Jack Rubin, Meryl Ain and Philip Dickstein.

of Schechter parents were comfortable with it as an option.<sup>17</sup>

The girls, in particular, were uncomfortable with the notion of making a change from the egalitarianism which they took for granted at Solomon Schechter, to sitting behind the mechitza at HANC.<sup>18</sup>

#### INTERNAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

There was even a change in attitude among the student body itself in its attitude towards the creation of a Solomon Schechter High School. As mentioned earlier, the improved relations between the Nassau and Suffolk schools facilitated more joint programming. The principals soon included the other two area schools (the Queens Solomon Schechter and the Brandeis School), so that during Spring 1993, there were joint programs, inter-school dances, basketball games, barbecues and similar activities among the four area Schechter Schools. Students developed friends in other Schechter schools. Students began to talk about how wonderful it would

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<sup>17</sup>HANC has become a less hospitable environment to Conservative Jews as it has moved more to the right. The number of Schechter graduates who attend HANC upon graduation from SSDS of NC has dwindled to one or two a year from a high of eight in 1984.

<sup>18</sup>Rabbi Michael Katz, President of Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly, interview by author, Hicksville, N.Y. November 16, 1993.

be if they could all go to high school together. The enthusiasm for the high school began within the school-- from the students themselves and their parents.

The old arguments of "not enough space and not enough interest" no longer held true. The new building on East Street in Hicksville was a large three story building. There were twenty-four classrooms in addition to a gymnasium, a large library, and a cafeteria. The entire third floor was reserved for the high school. Students began talking to each other and to their parents; parents began to talk to one another, and the excitement took on a life of its own.

#### IMPACT OF THE 1990 JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY

Much has been written about the impact of the Council of Jewish Federation's 1990 Jewish Population Survey upon the Jewish community. The now famous statistic, that 52% of Jews were intermarrying<sup>19</sup>, sent shock waves throughout the Jewish community. Many Jewish parents heard a clear message from the Population Study: if you want to increase the chances that

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<sup>19</sup>Barry Kosmin and Jeffrey Scheckner, CJF National Jewish Population Survey. (New York: Council of Jewish Federations, 1990), p.14.

your child will marry a Jew, provide your child with a quality Jewish education for your child. Parents who had felt comfortable with the public school option for high school began to have serious doubts. The intermarriage statistic was a catalyst for focusing parents on the full range of benefits that a Solomon Schechter High School might offer. When asked why a Solomon Schechter High School was so important to her, one parent wrote:

Personally, I must ask myself why I want my child to continue in a Jewish Day School. The answers that keep coming back to me are always the same. I want my child to develop into a mensch. I want my children to understand the neshamah of Yiddishkeit. I want my child to pick up the injured bird. To see a sunrise and say that is the power of God. I want my child to watch the change of seasons and relate to the true miracles around us. I want my child to learn to care-- to understand that Tzedakah is not charity. The school that my child will attend has to have role models to instill these values. The school of my dreams addresses the neshamah as well as the intellect. Public school can not fill those needs.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Wende Jager-Hyman to author, fax, October 25, 1993.

## CONFIGURATION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

With a substantial endowment of \$2 million, the Nassau Schechter was in the best financial condition of all the Schechter schools on Long Island and Queens to initiate the process of starting a high school. The Board of Directors of Nassau reached a policy decision which clearly set apart this attempt at creating a high school from the other false starts.

The Nassau school decided to assume all costs for one year in order to establish the high school, and also to invite the other three Schechter schools to join it as partners in the planning process. Beth Ostrow, chair of the committee in formation, asked each school to send one or two representatives to the initial meeting which was to take place at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County on May 3, 1993. The committee was carefully assembled to include the needed range of talent and a broad base of support.<sup>21</sup>

There were thirteen parents and board members from the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, eight outside consultants (in the field of Jewish education, fundraising, etc.), one representative of the Suffolk school, one representative of the Queens school, and one representative of the Brandeis School. There were three rabbis invited to serve

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<sup>21</sup>See Appendix C for a roster of the Steering committee.



on the Committee, including the president of the Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly. The principals of all four schools were invited to attend any meeting, but were not officially appointed to the Committee.

Mrs. Beth Ostrow played a key role in the early stages of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. A longtime board member of the school, and an influential as well as a generous donor, Mrs. Ostrow's style of leadership had initially been at odds with many of the parents who were strongly pushing for the creation of the high school. Beth was seen as an elitist who did things her own way without building popular support for her positions.

She was not known as a strong proponent of a quality Jewish education. In her previous work at the Nassau Schechter, on both the Board of Education and on the Board of Directors, her priorities were evident in her push for reform of the general studies curriculum, a dress code, a tighter discipline code, and for the addition of the study of another foreign language to the curriculum at the expense of time devoted to Judaic Studies. In fact, her children (although they attended Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County for brief periods of time) had matriculated at the Greenvale Academy, an exclusive North Shore preparatory school. The Jewish component of a Solomon Schechter Day School education

seemed to be less important to her than a rigorous secular education. Thus, there was a great deal of suspicion and resignation on the part of parents that this would be yet another attempt to create a high school which would not reflect their desires nor have popular support.

Yet, three factors proved to be influential in the nature of Mrs. Ostrow's involvement in the high school planning. First, Beth Ostrow had been opposed to the purchase of the St. Paul's Academy. She thought that although the facility would solve many of the school's problems, she was not in favor of the school buying such a large facility. Parents, who identified her as an elitist, were taken aback by her opinion about the Garden City site. Ostrow listened very carefully to the reactions of parents who worried about the importance of serving the broader Jewish community, not just the wealthy North Shore neighborhoods. She heard parents speak out passionately for a quality Jewish education for all students, and she began to believe that quality and Jewish education did not have to be mutually exclusive.

Second, Mrs. Ostrow had been a very active volunteer for UJA-Federation Women's Division for many years. After participating in several missions to Israel, she began to question the heavy emphasis on Israel as the hook on which to build American Jewish identity. Out of a growing realization

of the need for an educated American Jewish community, she became an avid proponent of UJA's continuity agenda. She came to believe that Jewish Day High School was a crucial way to deepen the Jewish allegiance of young people.<sup>22</sup>

Third, Ostrow found an increasing need to pursue her own Jewish studies. In March, 1992, she was chosen by the Wexner Foundation to participate in the Wexner Heritage Program, an educational program to provide federation and community lay leaders with a strong backgrounds in Jewish studies. Ostrow began a two year rigorous course of study in Jewish history, philosophy, Tanach, Hebrew, and Halacha.

Beth Ostrow proved to be a dedicated, driving force behind the committee's work. The creation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island became her "full time job". She spent two months talking with people from the four Schechter schools, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Chairman of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Education Department, and the Rabbinical Assembly of Nassau-Suffolk.

From these conversations, she drew up a list of talented and dedicated people in the region who would best represent the school's target population. Ostrow researched the latest

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<sup>22</sup> Beth Ostrow, interview with author, New York, N.Y. December 22, 1993.

educational thought on innovative high school education, and interviewed experts in Jewish education as well as some practitioners and theoreticians of Dr. TheodoreSizer's Coalition of Essential Schools.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Ostrow sent a letter of introduction<sup>24</sup> and a questionnaire<sup>25</sup> to every eighth grade parent.

Both of these gestures were appreciated tremendously by the parents. This was the first tangible sign that all parents would be included. Although the questionnaires have not been fully analyzed or tabulated to date, the high response rate indicated to the committee that the interest in the high school was significant.

While it remains to be seen if the school will open its doors in September, 1994, the Steering Committee can boast several exciting accomplishments. The Committee agreed early in the process that, lacking many models of Solomon Schechter High Schools, all members needed to learn more as the planning was taking shape. Therefore, each committee meeting began with a presentation by an educator of a specific topic of

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<sup>23</sup>Most helpful to Beth and to the entire committee was Mrs. Ruth Ritterband, Head of School at the Union and Essex Solomon Schechter Day School, and Mr. Bernard Kaplan, Principal of Great Neck North High School.

<sup>24</sup>See Appendix D.

<sup>25</sup>See Appendix E.

interest.

At the opening meeting of the Solomon Schechter High School Steering Committee, Dr. Shulamith Elster,<sup>26</sup> addressed the group on her experiences as the former Head of the Charles E. Smith Day School in Rockville, Maryland. She emphasized the need to define the school's mission, clarify its objectives, and find a "voice" for the school. This charge, beyond the many specific suggestions of Dr. Elster, became a guiding principle for the Committee in its work. As its first task, the Committee composed a mission statement.<sup>27</sup>

The most important quality about the meeting was the tone of seriousness coupled with an excitement and enthusiasm. As one committee member so aptly said, "It felt bigger than a regular board meeting. It felt larger than life."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Dr. Elster was then serving as Chief Education Officer of the Council on Initiatives in Jewish Education.

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix D for the mission statement.

<sup>28</sup> Meryl Ain, committee member, reacting to the first meeting the next morning, May 2, 1993 to author during a telephone conversation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THEORETICAL MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONS

There are many ways of understanding organizations which can clarify the process of establishing the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. The field of organizational theory has been growing very rapidly as confidence in the American corporate world has plummeted.<sup>29</sup> Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal have developed a very useful theoretical tool to analyze the effectiveness of organizations. The theoretical model is applicable to the private, public and educational sectors.

Looking at organizations and understanding them requires skill and a framework through which one can analyze their structure. Bolman and Deal argue that the most useful way to look at an organization is to break up one's observations and analyses into four discrete frames. They argue that "frame" is

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<sup>29</sup>Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal, *Modern Approaches to Understanding and Managing Organizations*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), p.xi

the perfect label to use since,

Frames are windows on the world. Frames filter out some things while allowing others to pass through easily. Frames help us to order the world and decide what action to take. Every[one] uses a personal frame, or image, of organizations to gather information, make judgements and get things done.<sup>30</sup>

These frames are useful for distinguishing four different perspectives for understanding organizations: the structural, the human resources, the political, and the symbolic.<sup>31</sup>

The structural approach emphasizes the importance of formal roles and relationships. The structures are created first, and people are engaged to fill the positions. The organization is generally seen through its rules, policies, and management hierarchies. If there is a problem in the organization, it is considered to be a problem of the existing structure.<sup>32</sup>

The human resource frame views organizations as being only as good as the sum of their people. The key to success within this frame is to tailor the job to match the strengths

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 27.

of the person. Group members need to find a role within the organization that is personally satisfying. Problems arise when human needs or desires are ignored.<sup>33</sup>

The political frame views an organization as an arena where power is sought. There are scarce resources available, and those with power, influence, and a strong coalition of people on their side generally control the allocation of those resources. Organizational goals and decisions emerge from an ongoing process of bargaining and negotiation among major players and reflect the relative power that each of the players is able to mobilize. Problems arise when the power is so diffuse, or unevenly or unfairly distributed, so that no consensus can be built to achieve the organization's goals.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the symbolic frame recognizes that institutions are not simply built on rationality, but rather on shared values and culture. The organization is seen as a drama where the myths, rituals, ceremonies and heroes determine the cohesion of an organization. It suggests that one purpose of an organization is to express the prevailing values and myths of society. From a symbolic perspective, organizations are judged not so much by what they do as by how they appear.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 148.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### APPLICATION OF THE THEORETICAL MODELS TO THE CREATION OF THE SOLOMON SCHECHTER HIGH SCHOOL OF LONG ISLAND

Bolman and Deal argue that only when one looks at organizations through all four frames can one fully appreciate their depth and complexity.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, in order to understand fully why the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County was able to begin the process of establishing a high school, it will be helpful to look at the school from the perspective of each of the frames delineated above.

#### APPLICATION OF STRUCTURAL FRAME

The Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County had outgrown both its physical space and the original role that it served on Long Island. The Jericho school was overcrowded,

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 6.

and the education of the students was suffering.<sup>37</sup> Faculty requested extra aides in the classroom since there was no room to increase the number of classes. Once the new building was secured and the space problem was solved, it seemed only natural to reconsider the organizational structure of the school. The restructuring of the administrative staff became a major issue which the Board of Education began to consider.<sup>38</sup> How could one principal effectively monitor and lead two different sites? There was a great deal of discussion at meetings of the Board of Education about various administrative structures.

As seen through the structural frame, the discussions were an attempt to reconsider the table of organization of the school. The symbol for this concern for structure was the ubiquitous "Responsibility Flow Chart" which was created at several meetings of the Board of Education.<sup>39</sup> Board members and, in particular, the professionals had many concerns: Who would report to whom? What would be the proper titles for all

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<sup>37</sup>Report of Philip Dickstein, Principal of the Solomon Schechter School of Nassau County to the Board of Education November 3, 1992.

<sup>38</sup>Minutes of the Board of Education, Solomon Schechter Day School, March 1, 1993, April 13, 1993.

<sup>39</sup>Appendices to Minutes of Board of Education Meetings of March 1, 1993, April 13, 1993, and May 4, 1993.

of the new positions created? Who would ultimately be in charge? Should there be one administrator for two buildings? Should there be a decentralization of the business office's responsibilities? Should there be a separate principal for the middle school? Would a head teacher in the middle school better serve the needs of the school?

While the president and several members of the Board of Directors agreed that the best long term solution for the school would be to engage a separate principal for the middle school, it was determined that for the short term it would be better to have one principal for two sites. It would keep the mission and character of the two schools consonant with one another and would save the school a great deal of money until the leadership had better determined the best future course of action. The business offices were consolidated into one office in the new building, and the position of administrator was eliminated.

When the planning for the high school began in earnest in May, 1993, the president felt that the high school fit into this new configuration of two buildings quite well. First, there were nine unused classrooms in the new building, and so the space was available at no extra cost to the school.

Second, in order to find the money to pay for the high school principal, it would be desirable to increase the

number of students in the building. The middle school students would be more likely to stay in the school through graduation if there was a Solomon Schechter High School option. The high school students would increase the school population, thereby increasing the income generated through tuition.

Therefore, the concept of developing a kindergarten through twelfth grade school was conveyed to parents as a "two way street." The Nassau school would help to create a high school by feeding into it, and the high school could help the Nassau County school retain students-- especially on the middle school level. The parents were sold on a high school on the basis of the structural advantages it afforded the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County.

#### APPLICATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

From the point of view of the human resource frame, the people who wanted to create the high school were essential to its successful beginning. A large number of parents were speaking out regularly about their need to have a high school for their children. The president recognized that the enthusiasm of these parents could be channeled constructively. He did not want parents to feel alienated from the school and decided that with a strong leader like Beth Ostrow to guide

them, the parents could help the school evolve from its current kindergarten through eighth grade structure to a kindergarten through twelfth grade school.

In addition, Mrs. Beth Ostrow was developing a new interest in quality Jewish education as a result of her study with the Wexner Heritage Program. Mr. Spielman was keenly aware that Mrs. Ostrow was looking for a project to engage her interest and to satisfy her commitment to volunteer work. He realized that if he did not find a project for her within the school, she would find outlets for her many talents and resources elsewhere. Therefore, it was the enthusiasm and interest among parents and several board members which caused the project to get beyond previous attempts to create a high school. Having the space within a building would not have been sufficient to enlist parent's support for a Solomon Schechter High School. The human needs of those interested in contributing to the Jewish community coupled with broad parental interest determined the successful launching of the Steering Committee of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island.

## APPLICATION OF THE POLITICAL FRAME

Viewed through the lens of the political frame, the Solomon Schechter School of Nassau County decided to unilaterally define the nature of the new high school. Therefore, it did not ask any of the other schools for seed money, as had been done in the past. The Nassau school alone lay down the ground rules for the development of the school. This was to be the high school of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, although graduates of the other Schechter schools would be encouraged to attend.

The Nassau Board of Directors realized that the new school would need to recruit students from the other schools in order to achieve the number of students necessary to succeed. Therefore, each of the other schools was asked to send representatives to the Steering Committee meetings.

The Steering Committee was weighted toward the Nassau County school. Thirteen out of the original twenty-two members of the Committee were associated with the Nassau school. Only one person was invited to represent each of the other schools. (The rest of the members of the Committee were financial consultants, educational consultants, and rabbis.) There was even an early discussion about what the name of the new school would be. Would it be called the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island or the Solomon Schechter High School of Nassau

County?

Ironically, the interest in the high school proved to be greater from the other three schools than from the Nassau County school. Several parents from the three other schools called Beth Ostrow and asked how they could become involved to contribute to the success of the school. Those committed parents who were willing to work were added to the committee. Committee members who remained involved were left on the Steering Committee. Those who did not attend meetings or undertake tasks were removed. As of September 1993, the Steering Committee members included two representatives from Solomon Schechter of Suffolk, two from Solomon Schechter of Queens, and two from the Brandeis School. The number from the Nassau Solomon Schechter School was six, a considerable decline. Therefore, it was not surprising that the Committee agreed in late August to name the school the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. While the financial power still squarely resided within the Nassau school, the shift to a more inclusionary committee broadened the interest in the high school in the other school communities.

#### APPLICATION OF THE SYMBOLIC FRAME

The symbolic frame reveals the myths and the rituals of

the school which shaped the development of the high school. A story that is often repeated by the founding generation of the school is that when the school leased its original facility in Jericho, there were only eighty students in a building designed to serve a population of 280. The decision, as the story was told, was based on faith in the future growth of the school. While many worried about the financial risk, the school was filled beyond capacity in just ten years. Therefore, whenever board members expressed reservations about leasing a second site, the "old timers" in the room would reassure them that history would hopefully repeat itself!

The overcrowding in the school during the late 80's and early 90's generated its own set of symbols. A former storage closet which became the principal's office served as the quintessential symbol of an overcrowded school. The sight of the beloved music teacher conducting class on the poorly lit stage of the auditorium (which was also serving as a storage room) irked parents. There were students sitting for six hours a day in rooms with no windows!

The rejection of applicants to the school due to lack of space, convinced many people that with additional classrooms, two more kindergarten classes could be added each year. Although no one had done a demographic survey to determine if there was such a market for new students, the long waiting



list for kindergarten coupled with the fact that some people were putting down deposits to secure a space in the kindergarten when their children were only two years old, were enough to keep the "myth" alive of the potential to serve many more Jewish families on Long Island.

Finally, if parents and students needed to be reassured that there was widespread desire for a high school, the standing ovation at the 1992 graduation convinced them. This was the "defining moment" for the high school.<sup>40</sup> The sound of that applause still reverberates for many who are actively working towards the creation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island.

#### USEFULNESS OF THE BOLMAN AND DEAL MODEL

Each of the frames elucidates an aspect of the creation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. No frame alone fully represents the complexity of factors which led to the inception of the school. Taken together, however, they deepen the understanding of how the school was formed and are useful tools for understanding the underlying dynamics of any organization.

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<sup>40</sup> As expressed by Mrs. Ina Levy to author several weeks after the June, 1992 graduation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LOOKING AHEAD

Many factors, both internal and external, historical and political, converged at the same time to create the Steering Committee of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. It remains to be seen if the Committee will succeed in attracting a visionary principal, a talented faculty, and sufficient students to open its doors in September 1994. There are many obstacles to overcome and many decisions to be made.

Dr. Burton Cohen delineates four challenges which the Conservative Movement must address in order for its elementary day schools to become a normative choice for Conservative families. These challenges are as relevant to a successful Solomon Schechter High School as they are to a lower school. They are: (1) narrow enrollment base, (2) the perception of Conservative Jewish parents that an intensive Jewish education will detract from their child's college and career preparatory experiences, (3) need to train Conservative teachers and (4) need to design and implement a distinctively

Conservative curriculum.<sup>41</sup>

The Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island will have to address each of these challenges. It must attract enough students from all four schools to broaden the enrollment base. It must convince parents that attendance in the school will not harm the students' chances of gaining admission to the best colleges. The school must engage an outstanding Jewish professional to lead the High School. Finding a faculty who can serve as role models, embodiments of the best of the Conservative Movement, who are qualified teachers is a challenge the Committee must meet. Last, the curriculum must reflect a distinctive Conservative ideology. Parents must be convinced that the curriculum is not simply the same curriculum as HANC with fewer hours devoted to Talmud.

However, with all of the challenges ahead, the realization that this is the best chance for the Jewish community of Long Island to create a Conservative High School has generated a sense of urgency and a desire to succeed. A new building, a group of talented individuals, a political

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<sup>41</sup>Burton Cohen, "Obstacles to the Development of the Day School as the Normative Mode of Jewish Education in the Conservative Movement," in Curriculum, Community, Commitment, ed. Daniel Margolis and Elliot Schoenberg (West Orange: Behrman House, 1992), p.182.

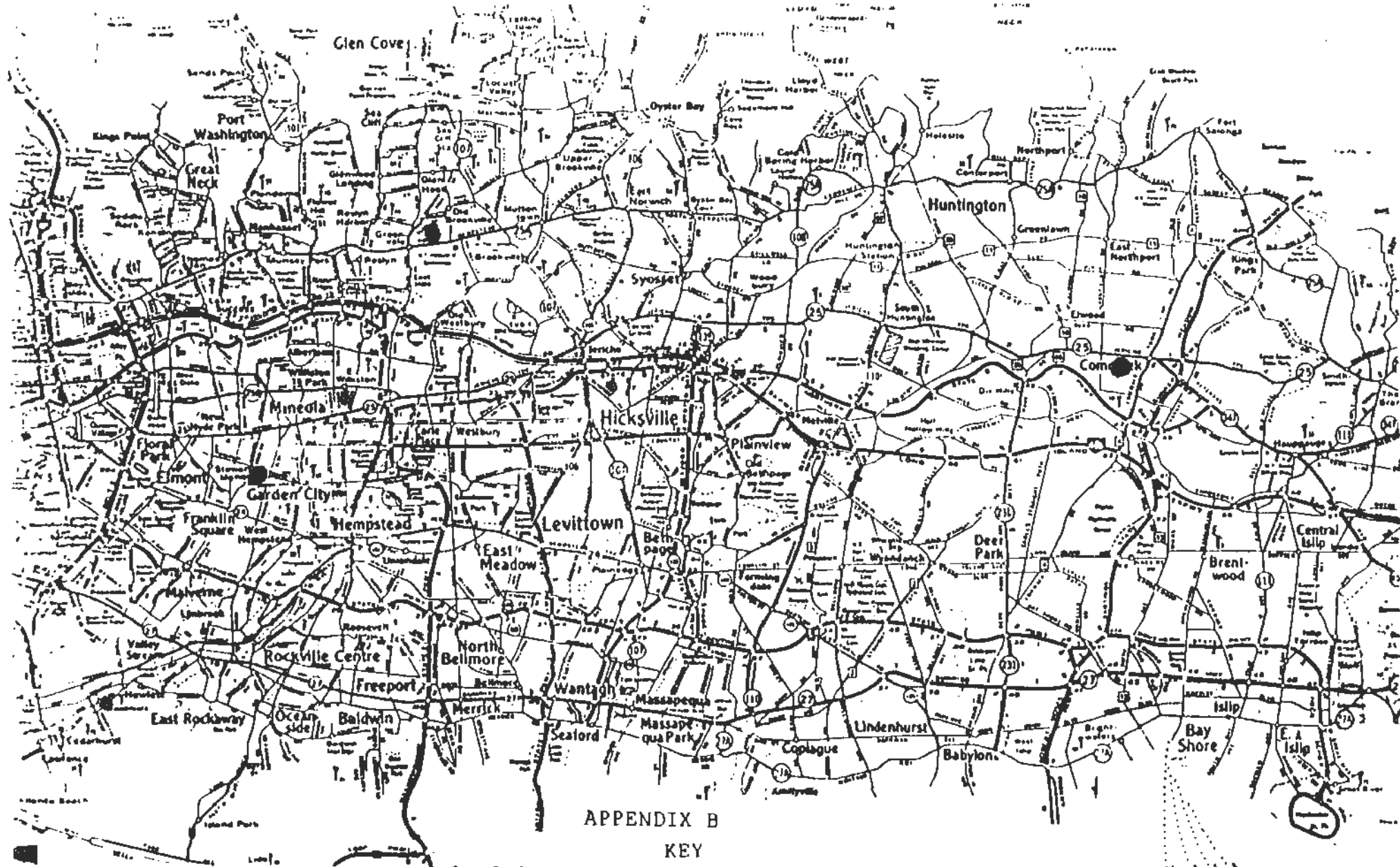
consensus, and the mythic backdrop have coalesced to create a project with great potential for success.

## THE AUTHOR AS PARTICIPANT-OBSERVER

The author has been a Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County parent since 1981. Her oldest child is a graduate of the school, and her three younger children are currently students of the Solomon Schechter of Nassau County. The author has served as a member of the Board of Education of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau since 1984. She also currently serves on the Steering Committee of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. She is Chair of the Principal Search Committee.

Although much of the research for this paper was conducted through interviews and the reading of past minutes, the author also culled from her experiences and recollections of events in which she was often an active participant. For example, the author and her husband, Rabbi Neil Kurshan, were among the parents who voiced strong opposition to the acquisition of the former St. Paul's Academy site.

The enterprise of being both a participant and an observer is a well documented phenomenon in the social science field. The reference list contains several theoretical explications of this type of field research.



# APPENDIX B

## KEY

- 1= Solomon Schechter Day School of Queens
- 2= Brandels School
- 3= Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County
- 4= East Street School
- 5= Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk
- 6= Mineola Site
- 7= St. Paul's Academy
- 8= Chiropractic College

# **STEERING COMMITTEE**

## **of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island**

**Susan Aberbach**

Chair - Board of Directors Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
Member of Executive Board - American Friends of Israel Disabled Veterans

**Meryl Ain**

Past Chair - Board of Education - Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
Doctoral Fellow in Educational Administration - Hofstra University  
Former Dean of Students/ Administrative Intern Oyster Bay - East Norwich School District  
Former Social Studies Teacher - Schreiber H.S. - Port Washington S.D.  
Board Member, National Solomon Schechter Day School Association

**Marcy Bergman**

Drama Director Camp Ramah in the Berkshires  
Family Education Specialist - Huntington Jewish Center  
Former Board Member PTA Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk County

**Arthur Caul**

Director - Beth Shalom Day Camp  
Curriculum Director Yeshiva Torah Temimah  
Retired Principal of Springfield Gardens High School

**Richard Geller**

Past member - Board of Directors - Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County

**Barbara Goldfarb**

Executive Board member - Roslyn-Old Westbury Campaign for UJA-Federation

**Arnold Gordon**

Member of the Executive Board - The Brandeis School  
Vice-President of Recruitment and Retention - The Brandeis School  
Member of Board of Trustees - Congregation Sons of Israel, Woodmere

**Irwin Hochberg**

Chairman - UJA Federation of New York  
Chairman of the Overseas Affairs Division as well as member of the Board of Governors  
UJA-Federation of Greater New York

**Wende Jager-Hyman**

Chair, Brd. of Education, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, Past PA Co-chair  
Member - Sisterhood Board, Temple Beth Shalom, Roslyn. Past Vice President  
Member of Board of National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education

**Bernard Kaplan**

Principal - Great Neck North High School  
Assistant-Principal - North Shore High School  
English teacher / Coordinator of School-Within-School, Wheatley High School  
Adjunct Professor - Syracuse University

**Rabbi Michael Katz**

Rabbi - Temple Beth Torah, Westbury, New York  
President - Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly

**Dr. Steven Klein**

Vice-President of the Board - Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County

**Rabbi Irwin Kula**

Senior Teaching Fellow - Leadership Development - CLAL

Rabbi - Congregation B'nai Adonai, St Louis, Missouri  
 Alisa Rubin Kurshan  
 Wexner Graduate Fellow studying at JTS towards a doctorate in Jewish Education  
 Member, UJA LI Task Force of Jewish Continuity  
 Member - Board of Education - Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
 Former Staff Advisor - Camp Ramah in the Berkshires

Batsheva Ostrow - Co-Chair  
 Member of the Board of Directors of Solomon Schechter School of Nassau County. Past Vice President.  
 North Shore Board Chair - Women's Division of UJA-Federation  
 Member of the Board of Directors - UJA -Federation of New York  
 Wexner Heritage Foundation Scholar

Dr. Edward Perkes  
 Member of the Board - Commack Jewish Center  
 Member of the Board - Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk County, Past President

Sheila Rubin  
 Member, Board of Trustees, Solomon Schechter School of Queens, former PTA President  
 Co-Director, Project Ezra (an independent agency serving the Jewish elderly in need on the Lower East Side).

James Schlesinger  
 President, Temple Beth Shalom, Roslyn, NY. Former Vice President, Education.  
 Member of the Board of Jewish Education of New York  
 Former Chair, Education Commission, United Synagogue, Metropolitan Region  
 Former Vice President, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County.  
 Currently Treasurer  
 Honorary Vice President, National Ramah Commission  
 Chairman, UJA Task Force, Youth Activities Development

William Spielman  
 President, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
 Former President, Temple Beth Shalom, Roslyn, NY  
 UJA Chair, Industry Group

Rabbi Howard Stecker - Co-Chair  
 Assistant Rabbi, Shelter Rock Jewish Center, Roslyn, NY  
 Member, Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly

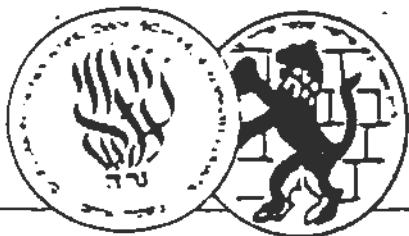
Bracha Werber  
 Curriculum Consultant, JTS Melton Research Center  
 Program Director, Camp Ramah in the Berkshires  
 Doctoral student, Jewish Theological Seminary  
 Co-Chair, Board of Education, Solomon Schechter School of Queens

Arlene Wittels  
 Chair, Women's Division, UJA-Federation of Greater New York  
 Member, Board of Directors, UJA-Federation  
 Member of Board of Trustees of JASA (the Jewish Association for Services to the Aged)  
 Member of the Committee of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and a delegate to the Jewish Agency Assembly  
 Former President, Jericho Jewish Center

Stephen Wolnek  
 Former President, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
 Vice President of the Board of Directors, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism,  
 Incoming Financial Secretary.  
 Member of the Board of Directors, JCRC of Greater New York  
 Member of the Board, AZYF  
 National Youth Commission Chairman, United Synagogue Youth  
 Past President, Temple Israel, Port Washington, NY  
 Secretary of National Solomon Schechter Day School Association  
 Member, Board of Directors, Camp Ramah in the Berkshires

Mark Zimmerman  
 Member, Board of Education, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County  
 Member, Board of Directors, Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County





# SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL OF NASSAU COUNTY

BARBARA LANE JERICHO NY 11753

(516) 935-1441

June 22, 1993

Dear Parents,

The Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County, in conjunction with the Solomon Schechter School of Queens, the Brandeis School, and the Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk County has announced the formation of a Conservative Jewish High School to start in September 1994 with 9th grade. As a high school affiliated with the Conservative movement, we seek to instill within our students commitment to Jewish knowledge and observance as vital aspects of one's personal life, as well as a commitment to rigorous scholarship, coupled with its encouragement of intellectual openness and pluralism.

Our mission is to create an extraordinary co-educational Jewish High School based upon the integration of Conservative Judaism with exciting, innovative approaches to both secular and Jewish education. A dedicated staff, a visionary administration and Board of Trustees, and actively involved parents will create a demanding, caring, supportive, and intellectually stimulating school environment that will challenge each and every student to maximize their academic, social, and spiritual potential. High expectations, a challenging academic environment and superior college preparation and advisement will prepare our graduates to enter the most demanding colleges in the country.

The Solomon Schechter High School, centrally located in Hicksville, will serve the entire Long Island Jewish community. A Steering Committee comprised of representatives from all the participating schools, plus interested community members, has been at work developing a mission statement, staffing requirements, curriculum development, programming, and scheduling. Special attention has been given to coordinating transportation needs for our students. An Open House is planned for late fall. As more information becomes available, we will keep you informed. If you have any questions, please contact one of the Steering Committee members listed below. You may also fill out the attached form and one of our members will contact you. We have enclosed a self addressed envelope for your convenience.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Beth Ostrow  
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Richard Geller  
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Representative of the Brandeis School:  
Arnold Gordon (516) 569-2940

Representative of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Queens:  
Sheila Rubin (718) 591-7045

Representative of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk  
County:  
Ed Perkes (516) 543-0332

Representatives of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau  
County:  
Alisa Kurshan (516) 271-2921  
Beth Ostrow (516) 334-0404

-----

I/We are interested in receiving more information about the  
Solomon Schechter High School for my son/daughter:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

School child presently attends: \_\_\_\_\_

Child will enter 9th grade in 19\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY

The Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island is making a special effort to involve parents in its planning. In order to enhance this process, we are asking that you please answer the following questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. If you had to choose one answer, how would you describe yourself?

- Totally committed to a Conservative High School on L.I.
- Very committed to a Conservative High School on L.I.
- Somewhat committed to a Conservative High School on L.I.
- Need to be convinced
- Not committed to a Conservative High School on L.I.

2. At the present time, would you enroll your own child in the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island?

- I would enroll my child the first year.
- I would enroll my child during the first three years.
- I would enroll my child only after the school was a proven success.
- I am currently undecided.
- I have no intention of enrolling my child.

3. -----What is of primary importance to you in selecting a high school for your child? (Put a 1 next to your first choice, then rate 2,3,4,5,6,7, 8).

- Secular academic program.
- Judaic academic program.
- Ability to be accepted to an excellent college.
- Spiritual and religious values.
- Caring and nurturing environment.
- Positive peer group.
- Wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Wide range of accelerated and Advanced Placement courses.

4. If you had to describe the educational program at the Solomon Schechter School your child is currently attending, what word would you use?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair -
- Poor

5. Do you plan to attend the Open House on November 7?

- Yes
- No
- I am interested in the new high school but cannot attend. Please contact me.

COMMENTS

-2-

Name (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for helping us to serve you better. Please return before Oct. 11.

## APPENDIX F

### SOLOMON SCHECHTER HIGH SCHOOL OF LONG ISLAND MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to create an excellent Jewish Day School High School committed to quality in both Judaic and secular education in a caring and supportive environment in order to nurture and to train the future leaders of the American Jewish Community. As a high school affiliated with the Conservative movement, we seek to instill within our students commitment to Jewish knowledge and observance as vital aspects of one's personal life. We rely upon Conservative Judaism's commitment to traditional observance and rigorous scholarship, coupled with its encouragement of intellectual openness and pluralism, to create a compelling, yet flexible, spiritual climate for our students.

We are dedicated to the full development of our students through an enriched, comprehensive, and innovative secular and Judaic Studies program which will foster critical thinking in all aspects of the curriculum. A visionary Head of School, a dedicated faculty, a responsive Board of Trustees and an active parent community will create a demanding, intellectually stimulating, inclusive school community that will challenge each student to realize his/her academic, spiritual and social potential. Students will graduate from the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island with a commitment to their community, a love of learning and a respect for knowledge, a pride in their work and accomplishments and the ability to think clearly, critically and creatively. They will have a rich understanding of Judaism, of their Jewish cultural heritage and a fluent command of the Hebrew language. They will have the ability to take on difficult tasks and to problem solve. They will have highly developed skills in speaking and in writing lucidly and the ability to discipline themselves in order to accomplish long term goals. Moreover, they will have gained the knowledge that the end of learning is the creation of a just and humane society.

Our goal is to nurture culturally aware, compassionate, and socially responsible Jews who will be a blessing for the Jewish community and for American society overall, and who will reflect God's presence in all of life's endeavors.

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## INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

Personal interviews were conducted with the following individuals from September 1993 through December 1993:

Rabbi Robert Abramson	Director of Education, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Meryl Ain	Chair, Board of Education of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County 1983-1991
Harry Brockstein	First President and Founder of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County
Philip Dickstein	Principal of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County 1985-present
Wende Jager-Hyman	Chair, Board of Education 1991-present
Rabbi Michael Katz	President of the Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly 1990-1992
Rabbi Neil Kurshan	President of the Nassau-Suffolk Rabbinical Assembly 1988-90
Beth Ostrow	Co-Chair of the High School Steering Committee
Jack Rubin	Executive Vice-President of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County
Bill Spielman	President of Solomon Schechter of Nassau County- June, 1992- present
Sol Turk	Principal of the Brandeis School
Steven Wolnek	President of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County- June, 1983- June, 1992

January 29, 1995

Dear CIJE Colleagues:

I have intended for some time to send you a summary of our early January meeting - along with a list of names of potential coaches and a draft of a letter to them. I have, however, had a hard time getting to the task of drafting this material. In part, this has had to do with the press of University of Wisconsin beginning-of-the-semester matters; but I think there's more to it than that! I think there's also been an element of procrastination, procrastination rooted in a measure of uncertainty concerning certain elements of the path we charted in January.

I've solved my problem by determining to do two things rather than one: in Part I, to summarize the course of our deliberations and our decisions; and in Part II, to articulate some of my concerns and a possible alternative route to go. As you will see, some of the concerns addressed in Part II are alluded to in Part I.

My sense is that this document may not be as well-organized as I'd like, and it probably suffers from a measure of repetition. My apologies - but I figured it was better to get it out than to take too much time working it over.

I'd welcome your thoughts as soon as possible.

Thanks.

DP



## SUMMARY OF OUR JAN. NEW YORK MEETING - AND SOME AFTER-THOUGHTS

### INTRODUCTION

The following document attempts to do two things: first, to summarize where we went and what we decided at the early January meeting in New York (participants: Alan, Barry, Gail, Nessa, and myself), as well as to fill-in certain details; second, to raise some questions concerning some of the decisions we made. I have felt a measure of uneasiness concerning some of them and rather than keep them to myself I thought it best to share them and to suggest some possibilities that flow out of them.

### PART I

#### THE PLAN WE'VE PROJECTED FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

Building on the document regarding the "building capacity" challenge that had been prepared for the January meeting, our discussion raised questions concerning some of its points and moved towards defining an agenda for the months ahead. This is to be a period in which we build capacity in two ways: by furthering our own learning and through the identification, recruitment, and cultivation of a cadre of able individuals from whom coaches will be chosen to work with institutions. It is anticipated that there will be at least one, and possibly 2 seminars for the individuals identified as possible coaches between now and the end of the summer; and that next year, some of these individuals will be working with institutions. As they engage in this work, they will keep careful track of what they are doing and learning; they will also meet periodically with one another and with other CIJE staff for purposes of furthering their, and our, learning. With this in mind, we spent much of the morning identifying the kinds of people we would want as coaches, developing a list of names, thinking through the kind of letter that need to be sent to them, and raising pertinent questions. Below is a summary of decisions/issues/questions that arose in relation to this agenda.

Two meetings or one? The initial idea developed at our meeting was to aim for a late spring initiatory meeting, followed by a lengthier summer workshop (probably in Cambridge). In the aftermath of our meeting, two considerations have led me to think that it might be wiser to hold only one meeting (in the summer), rather than two. One of these considerations is cost: particularly since some of the participants may be paying their own way - and transportation is a major cost, having one set of meetings rather than two might make it easier for our targeted clientele to participate. A second consideration is this: in my mind, the primary reason for a spring meeting was to assess the

area 'b'  
may be  
"coaches"

match between promising individuals and our project, so that by the time the summer seminar came along, the participants would only be individuals who we were prepared to move into coaching roles. But as we discussed the future in NY, it seemed clear that in inviting folks to a seminar next summer, we would not be committing ourselves to employing any of them as coaches; rather, coaches would be selected from among them. Thus, it no longer seemed to me imperative that we weed anyone out in the spring. A third consideration is that a decision to hold two rather than one sets of seminars commits a lot of our energies immediately to the development of a clientele for the seminars, to dealing with logistics of various kinds, to curriculum, etc.; I am fearful that this will not leave us with the time to do the kind of learning we projected for this period. In any event, this remains a matter in need of decision!

How many people should be invited to the seminar(s)? The Pekarsky-document had assumed we would invite a small group of up to 10 individuals, on the assumption that they were hand-picked to work with institutions. Alan encouraged us to think of inviting a substantially larger group of individuals (20 to 25), on the assumption that in the end only some of them would seem suitable for our purposes. Our discussion adopted the Hoffmann view (though, as will be noted later, I continue to have some concerns in this area).

Who would make a good coach? Criteria identified included the following: 1. Strong Jewish knowledge; 2. Knowledge of settings; 3) conceptual bent; 4) strong interpersonal skills, including capacity to work effectively with different kinds of constituency (rabbi, lay leaders, teachers, principals, etc.) (See Pekarsky's "Building Capacity" piece for a related discussion).

Categories of coaches. As the discussion unfolded, some important distinctions were made concerning the kinds of coaches we might want to recruit:

a. "Young blood" and "tried and true": the feeling was that we should be looking not just for people who've already proved their skill and savvy but also for people of promise in whom we should be investing.

b. Agents (or representatives) of institutions or communities and individuals who do not come representing any body. The distinction was important because while there might be natural avenues for securing funding in the case of those who are sent by communities and/or institutions, this may not be the case for those who come as individuals. Moreover, whereas those who come representing some body may have some sense of the immediate contexts in which they will go on to do some coaching, this may not be true for those who do not come representing any institution.

what  
about  
coaching

This suggested that in the case of those who come as individuals, there might be instances in which we would try to help them secure funding -- possibly by establishing a linkage between them and some institution that they would work with (as coaches) after the training period.

c. A third distinction is between those who come with a clear understanding that the coaching-skills they acquire will be put to work in a particular institutional or communal context and those who come without any clear sense of where (or even whether) what they learn will be put to use. (This point overlaps the point made in b.)

EDUCATIONAL  
LEADERS  
AS COACHES  
IN THEIR  
OWN  
INSTITUTIONS

Money-issues in relation to the coaches. There are two issues: one of them pertains to the seminar(s), the other to their work - down the road - as coaches.

*"mentor  
fellow"*  
With respect to the costs incurred in coming to the seminar(s), we came to the view that CIJE was not responsible for such costs. In the case of many of the kinds of folks we imagined would participate, funding should come from the institution or community for which they work (and which will reap benefits from their training). In the case of others (as noted earlier), we might try to pair them with particular institutions whom they would later serve; or, they would have to pay for themselves. Some of us were less confident than others that those who don't have external sources of support would find their way to the projected seminar(s).

We did not systematically look at the question of how their work in the field would be paid for beyond the summer; but implicit in our conversation was the view that in the case of many of them, their work would fall within their job-descriptions and hence would be paid for by their parent-institution or community; in the case of others, their work might be paid for by the institution they are coaching. Conceivably, in the case of some communities, a kind of barter-system could be worked out, so that X could coach in Y's community in exchange for Y coaching an institution in X's community.

What will coaches do? Precisely what coaches (if "coaches" is in the end the right term - which it may not be) will do out in the field is what we are trying to better understand through our own learning this spring. Nonetheless it is possible in a general sort of way to suggest the kind of work they would be engaged in. This would include:

a. Regular consultations to the institution's lead-staff designed to keep them focused on critical questions and tasks, to suggest and/or discuss possible desiderata, plans and strategies, and to help assess

the best way to approach the institution's educational challenges;

b. Facilitating or leading discussions, classes, or workshops designed to carry the work forward;

c. accessing CIJE-resources that would be useful to the institution in its reform-efforts, e.g. MEF or someone representing the Educated Jew project.

d. carefully monitoring and logging what transpires with an eye towards CIJE's learning.

e. participation in regular meetings and workshops with other coaches and with CIJE staff, with the aim of further professional growth and building our collective body of lore..

How much time this work would take is something we haven't discussed; but I imagine spending a day or so with the institution every 6 weeks, with periodic phone-consultations in between; and also periodic meetings with other coaches, CIJE staff, and educators who can guide our collective learning (about week or so per year). This amounts to about 3 weeks of work per year -- not insubstantial. I don't know whether this is way off-base (and if so, in what direction). Gerstein may be helpful to us on this point.

What's the incentive for people to join with us? It was not at all clear from our discussions that those coming to our seminars and going on to work as coaches would necessarily be making more money than they now do -- particularly if their coaching turned out to be part of their job-portfolio. People felt that the main reasons for participation would be professional growth and the sense that what they learned could be put to effective use in their own work-contexts. What this means is that our recruitment efforts for the upcoming seminars need to emphasize these elements:

"as part of its efforts to improve Jewish ed. in North America, CIJE is offering talented senior educators a professional development opportunity that will, we believe, enhance your work. Beyond this, we are hopeful that some of you will play a role coaching institutions that we will be working with intensively..."

Is there a "CIJE-approach" - and if not, how can we proceed? Pekarsky's building-capacity document referred to using the spring and summer seminars as a way of introducing our colleagues-to-be to the "CIJE-approach?" Well, someone asked at our meeting, exactly what is this CIJE approach? Do we have one?

The answer to this question, intimated in the "building capacity" document, is somewhere between "Yes" and "No". "No" - in the sense that we don't have, as does Levin, a step-by-step process to recommend. But "Yes!" in the non-trivial sense that we have the following:

1. a set of guiding principles (of the kind summarized in the building-capacity document, pp. 7-9) that relate to such matters as the kinds of stake holders that are needed, the place of content in the process, the need to wrestle seriously with issues of goals, etc.
2. an understanding (by the end of the spring a deep understanding) of pertinent approaches to educational improvement (including the Educated Jew project, Sizer, Levin, Comer, etc.), and a commitment and ability on the part of coaches - alone or as teams! - to use elements of one or more of them thoughtfully and eclectically in working with institutions.
3. an understanding that this stage of our enterprise requires structures and an ethos that support careful experimentation, monitoring, and efforts to build a richer knowledge-base.
4. an understanding of the kinds of individuals who are likely to subscribe to #'s 1 - 3, both in theory and in practice.

It is arguable that these four elements are jointly enough to enable us to identify potential coaches, to plan the spring and summer workshops, and to launch work with institutions; this in any case is what the "building capacity" document asserted. BUT: it was precisely this assumption that was called into question at our January meeting. Do we really have enough to offer the sophisticated group we intend to convene so that they come away feeling that (to use Barry's phrase) "we've got our act together", that it's important, that their time has been well-spent, and that it will be worthwhile to share in this process?

There are at least three possible answers to this question, all of which need to be seriously considered: 1) we do know enough to proceed; 2) we don't know as much as we'd like, but we know enough to get started, and much of what we need to be learning will only be learned through the doing - a kind of *na'aseh v'nishmah*!; 3) we don't yet know enough "to go public" and need to give ourselves more time to develop capacity before launching the kinds of seminars we've been projecting.

Our meeting in early January took #2 as its working assumption. I want to re-visit this assumption in the second part of this document.

What would a seminar/workshop look like? We did not explore

this in any detail, but we spoke a bit about what a two-day spring seminar might look like. In addition to including a chance to familiarize participants with the thinking that has informed the Goals Project, we might give them an opportunity to meet with the likes of Scheffler and/or Greenberg and/or Sizer -- both as ways of exciting them and as ways of stimulating some good thinking concerning some elements of our project.

As we discussed names of possible invitees, it was clear that, if they come, we will be dealing with a sophisticated group of people, and this must be very seriously taken into account in thinking about how to structure whatever seminars we develop.

Names. (In no particular order - some probably misspelled)

Here is a list of the names who were mentioned. This is not a final list in two senses - 1) we aren't committed to all the names on the list; 2) we may well want to add others.

Rob Toren  
Tzivia Blumberg  
Betsy Katz  
Susan Shevitz  
Elaine Cohen  
Poupko (Montreal)  
Jodi Hirsch  
Debbie Kerdimann  
Michael Berger (Atlanta)  
Debbie Hirschman  
Bob Abramson  
Jack Bieler  
David Ackerman  
Amy Gerstein  
Carol Ingle  
Vicki Kelman  
Carolyn Keller  
Marion Gribbetz  
Sara Gribbetz  
Stuart Seltzer  
Danny Lehman  
Amyh Wolk Katz  
Mitch Cohen  
Kyla Epstein  
Elana Kanter  
Sara Lynn Newberger  
Cindy Rich  
Eddie Rauch  
Michael Posnick  
Lifsa Schachter  
Jeffrey Schein  
Karen Sobel  
Marci Dickman  
Steve Chervin  
Debbie Goldstein

Zvi Blanchard  
Kula  
Paley  
David Soloff  
Yossi Gordon  
Harvey Shapiro

Recruitment. Recruitment will involve the following steps:  
a) refining the list; b) drafting a letter to them (see below);  
c) phone calls (by people who know them) that follow-up the  
letter; c) contact with communal/institutional leadership to  
explain the project and get them to financially and otherwise  
support the effort of invitees that "belong" to them; d) finding  
ways to subsidize promising individuals who will not be covered  
by an institution or community.

Below is a first draft of a letter to invitees:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As you know, the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education  
is engaged in a multi-faceted effort to improve Jewish education  
in North America.

The Goals Project is one of several projects launched by the  
Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education in its efforts to  
help improve the quality and the outcomes of Jewish education in  
North America. The Goals Project is organized around several  
guiding assumptions, including the following: 1) that in Jewish  
(as in general) education inadequate attention to the  
identification of appropriate goals and to their thoughtful  
implementation significantly undermines our efforts to educate;  
2) that efforts at institutional reform in Jewish education must  
seriously address questions concerning a guiding vision or set of  
goals; 3) that with the help of thoughtful resource-people, it  
is possible for an institution that is serious about change to  
make considerable progress on this front.

Guided by these assumptions, CIJE is inviting a select  
group of educators to participate in a set of seminars designed  
to enhance their ability to help Jewish educating institutions  
deal with issues of goals in the context of their efforts at  
self-improvement. Although CIJE will be satisfied if the  
seminars accomplish this purpose, it is also hopeful that in the  
aftermath of the seminar, some of you will be interested in  
working as coaches or resource-people with one or more  
institutions that are committing themselves to a long-term  
process of struggling with a goals agenda as part of a broad  
effort of educational reform.

Our plan is to hold a day-long seminar at Harvard in late  
April to launch this effort. At this seminar, you will have the  
opportunity to learn more about CIJE's approach and efforts in  
the Goals Project; you will also have the chance to meet with

\_\_\_\_\_, who is a thoughtful leader in the area of educational reform. A follow-up 5-day seminar in the summer is designed to help participants grow in their ability to help institutions go through a process of change that takes goals seriously. Given the thoughtfulness and experience of the people we are inviting to participate, we are confident that this seminar will also provide CIJE staff with an invaluable opportunity to further to test and refine their own views on the issues we will be considering.

We are happy to announce that CIJE will cover all tuition-costs associated with the seminar and that it will provide X \$ of meals; other costs are the responsibility of participants or their institutions. Please let us know whether you are interested in attending at your earliest convenience. We are hopeful that you will be able to take advantage of this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Alan Hoffmann, Executive Director  
CIJE

SOME MISC. POINTS MADE AT THE MEETING (NOT MENTIONED ABOVE)

1. It was suggested that in addition to looking at the Educated Jew Project, Senge/Fullan, Sizer, and Levin, we should also be looking to the work of Comer. Michael Ben-Avi (at JTS) works for Comer and would be a good contact-person.

2. On what distinguishes our approach: at other times we've focused on the importance of engaging stake holders in an institution in a process of study, in wrestling with content-issues; at today's meeting it was suggested that an additional distinguishing feature of our approach is that it actively engages lay-people in thinking about issues relating to goals.

3. We should not invest too much effort in learning what others are doing before entering our own doing-phase. There is only so much we can learn from them; moreover, much of our own learning will take place in the doing. Which is not to deny that we can learn from the practical knowledge that's already out there!

It was suggested in this connection that perhaps one of the roles Daniel Marom could fulfill (since he will be available to us) is to scout out the landscape with attention to approaches, strategies, and practical knowledge that might be of value to us.

4. We re-visited a comment I made early last summer concerning Fred Newmann's view that there are no serious success-stories out there -- that is, stories about institutions that had "turned it



around." When scrutinized, he suggested, it turns out that the success was more rhetorical than real -- or else short-lived. We felt at our meeting that this view needed to be tested out some more rather than just accepted with resignation. Pekarsky will meet again with Newmann and do other relevant follow-up inquiry.

5. A question was raised concerning our own study. Earlier we had spoken about some seminars designed exclusively for ourselves prior to meeting with potential coaches. This seems to have droppe out. Should we provide for thia? (Parenthetically: Fullan is unavailable to come to anything, but is willing to meet with me in March in Toronto; perhaps one or more of the rest of us could come along. Gerstein is unavailable until summer due to dissertation commitments, but she is interested in participating in a summer seminar.)

## PART II

Part II of this report will be brief and somewhat more general. It tries to raise some basic questions concerning what we are projecting for the period ahead. A useful starting-point in assessing the agenda mapped out above is to remind ourselves, or clarify, what our fundamental priorities and goals are at this stage of the enterprise. In fact, this question -- What are the goals of the Goals Project? -- arose at our January meeting. Though not addressed in depth then, it is worthy of attention as we look ahead. Such attention may help us not to scatter our scarce resources in too many or low priority directions or to bite off more than we can chew.

**GOALS FOR THE GOALS PROJECT:** Here are some of the themes that are often at work in our discussions:

a) to develop a knowledge-base and know-how concerning such matters as: the critical role that goals and vision play in education; dimensions of the effort to become more goals-and-vision-driven; ways in which educating institutions can become more goals- and vision-driven.

b) to develop a reservoir of resources (material and human) that will be available to institutions in their effort to become more goals- and vision-driven.

c) to catalyze in various communities around the country (or at least 9 of them) an interest in encouraging their constituent institutions to become more vision-driven.

d) to actively work, via coaches, with a number of institutions in their efforts to become more vision-driven. This could mean identifying 6 institutions (2 day schools, two camps, and two congregational institutions); or it could mean something more ambitious that included a coalition of vision-driven institutions.

If some variant of d) is adopted, we need to be clear what underlying purpose is:

i. our own learning;

ii. showing what can be done when issues of

goals are seriously addressed,

iii. expanding the field of institutions engaged with issues of goals and vision.

e) to work with the communities that shared in the Jerusalem seminar as they try to encourage their institutions to become more vision-driven (=outstanding commitments!), via the promised local seminars and other strategies.

My sense is that we may need to make some strategic decisions concerning which of these to emphasize in the period ahead. Such decisions will, I think, enhance our effectiveness significantly.

#### SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

I noted earlier that I have had some uneasiness about the direction we sketched out in our January meeting. The uneasiness concerns a matter intimated by Barry when he asked whether we have an "it", that is, a CIJE approach, to share with invitees to a conference. Above I made the case that we do -- and that, to the extent that we don't, immersion in the world of practice is the key to developing a useful one. But I have some doubts about this. I am concerned that there may considerable more work we want to do before "going public" in a splashy way by inviting a whole lot of people (not all of whom are necessarily friendly to CIJE) and trying to engage them. To devote a lot of our energies to convincing the kind of clientele we've projected that we know what we're doing and that they should be on-board with us may not be as wise as a strategy that allows us to focus more of our energies on our own learning.

My own instinct is decidedly not to avoid cultivating coaches and immersing in practice. Rather, I think we should consider going about it in a smaller-scale way as a prelude to something bigger down the road. In a nut-shell, I think we should consider the following:

1. that we identify and recruit a small group of potential coaches (5 to 10 max.), consisting of people whom we strongly believe in and who we think will be genuinely sympathetic to what we're up to. These should be the kinds of people we trust and can go back-stage with as we think through what we're doing.

2. that we hold one or two sets of seminars for this more limited clientele in the months ahead.

3. that we identify a limited number of prototype institutions (no more than a total of 4 or so) that these coaches work with (singly or in combination); one or more of us may also be at work in this process.

4. that, perhaps with the help of MEF, we carefully monitor and try to learn from our efforts, evolving an increasingly sharp approach to our various challenges.

5. that simultaneously we involve other communities in the Goals process by regional or local seminars of the kind we did in Jerusalem. This would be consistent with the idea of moving from 3 to 9.

6. that we find some ways of beginning to tackle the "Community goals" problem, in which, as we know, there's a great deal of interest.

7. that, if we seem to be making reasonable progress in our various pilot-projects with prototype institutions, we proceed next spring to involve in our work the kind of larger group of possible resource-people that we identified in January. By then, we will be surer of where we're going and of where we want to take them.

Although this approach may seem somewhat more modest, it strikes me as possibly safer in more than one respect, while at the same time still being ambitious. To me it feels more in line with where we are in terms of available resources for the project and knowledge-base. Needless to say, I could be wrong about how to proceed and would welcome your thoughts.

**COUNCIL FOR INITIATIVES IN JEWISH EDUCATION**

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**FAX COVER SHEET**

February 7, 1995

**TO:** Rabbi Michael Paley  
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**FROM:** Alan D. Hoffmann

**NO. OF PAGES (including cover):** 5

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For your information.

slb

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Does this match your understanding of the schedule for the day? We'd like to give this out on Sunday morning, so please let me know.

We'd like to set up a conference call before Thursday at 4:00 P.M. to review the program (we have a conference call with our facilitators to brief them at that time)

Thanks

Steve

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FROM: MICHAEL ROSENZWEIG

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COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

An example

23 Northwood Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

February 6, 1995

Cheryl and Ed Finkel  
3388 Northaven Lane  
Atlanta, Georgia 30340

Dear Cheryl and Ed:

We are delighted that you will be participating in the program this Sunday (February 12), which will begin in earnest our effort to launch a new community Jewish High School in Atlanta. The program, which will be facilitated by Alan Hoffmann and his colleagues from the Council on Initiatives in Jewish Education, will help us engage in some serious reflection concerning the philosophy that will inform our new school. We do not perceive a need at this stage to arrive at a comprehensive set of goals, but rather to define a framework, or perhaps a statement of purpose, that is clear enough to offer a measure of guidance in assessing candidates for the directorship of the new school but is also sufficiently flexible to allow the new director, in collaboration with relevant constituencies, to shape the direction of the school. We therefore hope to emerge from the program with some understanding of the centrality of thinking about goals in forming a new institution, as well as a kind of "framing" statement to move us toward creation of the school.

In advance of the program, I am enclosing three items that we would ask you to read carefully:

1. Draft Mission Statement;
2. Article by Moshe Greenberg; and
3. Article by Alisa Kurshan

The draft mission statement should not be perceived as final or definitive in any way. Rather, this draft represents a first iteration in a process to which we expect to return continuously as we move toward creation of the new high school. The draft mission statement represents an early effort by me, Steve Berman and Felicia Weber, which we are distributing to help focus discussion this Sunday.

Since our work on February 12th will focus on the important roles that vision and goals can play in guiding the work of an educating institution, we thought the piece by Professor Greenberg was particularly apt. The Greenberg essay, which was commissioned by the Educated Jew Project of the Mandel Institute for Advanced Study and Research in Jewish Education, represents a



February 6, 1995

Page 2

thoughtful scholar's answer to the following question: What is the kind of person that we should be trying to cultivate through Jewish education? We encourage you to read the Greenberg piece not because it represents a view that should be taken as authoritative, but because attention to Professor Greenberg's ideas can help stimulate fruitful reflection concerning the kind of Jewish human being that the new school should try to cultivate.

The Kurshan article, finally, provides us with an interesting example of one effort to create a new high school. The author of the piece, Alisa Kurshan, is a Jewish educator who served as committed lay leader in the effort to create the new Solomon Schechter High School that opened in Long Island in September of 1994. We offer two caveats regarding the Kurshan piece: First, the paper underplays the vital role that Ms. Kurshan herself performed in making the process successful. Second, the school as it emerged differs in some significant ways from what is described in the paper and, in any event, should not be viewed as necessarily descriptive of the kind of school that we will create for our community. Nevertheless, the paper offers many insights for us as we move through our process.

We very much look forward to your participation this Sunday. If you have any questions, please call me (420-4609 -- work; 881-6034 -- home), Steve Berman (320-7570 -- work; 252-2769 -- home) or Felicia Weber (843-8106).

Very truly yours,

Michael Rosenzweig

MR/dru

Enclosures

## **NEW JEWISH DAY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Sunday, Feb. 12, 1995**

**Greenfield Hebrew Academy**

<b>8:30-9:00 A.M.</b>	<b>Welcome and Refreshments</b>
<b>9:00-9:30 A.M.</b>	<b>Introduction of the Program and Leaders</b> (whole group)
<b>9:30-9:45 A.M.</b>	<b>Goals and Practices: Identifying the Challenge</b> (whole group) Writing exercise
<b>9:50-10:20 A.M.</b>	<b>First Break-Out Session (small groups)</b> Anchoring goals in a vision of the kind of graduates and community we are hoping to develop
<b>10:25-10:40 A.M.</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>10:40-12:00 noon</b>	<b>The Power of Guiding Visions (whole group)</b>
<b>12:00-12:45 P.M.</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>12:45-1:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Orientation to the Afternoon's Work</b> (whole group)
<b>1:05-2:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Second Break-Out Session (small groups)</b> Five themes will be explored: (a) Prayer and religious practices; (b) Jewish texts; (c) Hebrew; (d) Jewish history; (e) Israel
<b>2:00-2:15 P.M.</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>2:15-3:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Reviewing the Findings of the Small Groups</b> (whole group)
<b>3:00-3:45 P.M.</b>	<b>Concluding the Day (whole group)</b> Identification of areas of agreement and disagreement, areas for further exploration, and discussion of next steps
<b>3:45-4:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Evaluation of the Day</b>

Notes

①

Insane

R. 15/13

D. Fellowship.

D. Wagon

Bill Robinson.

CITE.

②

Remember groups

MEMO TO: Community High School Group  
FROM: Daniel Pekarsky  
RE: The two matters we discussed  
DATE: Feb.8, 1995

In our conversation earlier today, you requested specifics concerning two matters: 1) Themes/issues/categories that might be helpful in stimulating thoughtful discussion in the afternoon discussion-groups; 2) Greater clarity concerning the morning's small group discussion so as to better prepare the facilitators. I hope the following proves helpful.

#### THEMES/QUESTIONS/ISSUES FOR THE GROUPS MEETING IN THE AFTERNOON

Note that the questions, issues we are identifying are suggestions only, and they certainly don't represent an exhaustive list of the kinds that might be helpful. On the contrary, a facilitator may find some but not all of them of useful; and there might be others not represented below that could turn out to be more helpful. Note that a number of the questions in each category are over-lapping; they represent different ways of getting at some central issues. Facilitators should use their judgment in deciding which to draw on (based in part on what they personally feel comfortable with); it would be a mistake for them to feel that they need to or should address all of them! They should keep in mind that the important thing is to stimulate some thoughtful deliberation concerning the kinds of aims that should animate the institution in the particular domain their group is looking at. Moreover, they should be reminded that this is a first effort at the task at hand, and that it need not at this stage be either a comprehensive treatment of the domain in question or more than a first draft of what they do take up. Finally, although they should be aiming for some general framing principles, they should also keep track of the issues that come up--especially those that might prove difficult for the participants.

#### HEBREW

Is the learning of Hebrew important?

If so, why is it important?

What kind of Hebrew -- modern or classical?

What kind of facility in Hebrew would you hope to encourage - reading? writing? speaking? Praying?

How, if at all, do you envision Hebrew fitting into the life of graduates of your institution? For Example:

Communication with Israelis in Israel?

Reading of great literature? If so, what kind? Modern Israeli literature? Biblical literature? Israeli newspapers?

Prayer?

What attitude towards the Hebrew language, and its use, would you hope to encourage? Would it be different from the attitude you would hope to encourage towards English or French?

#### PRAYER/RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Your school is going to have to make decisions concerning a range of matters like the following:

Dress-codes, e.g. when, if ever, are boys to wear kippot?

What is the place (if any) of prayer in the life of the school? If prayer does have a place in the school, is it to be egalitarian?

How are various Kashrut issues to be handled?

Does the school care what its students do on Shabbat?  
Does the school care what its teachers do on Shabbat?

What religious practices should be studied as part of the curriculum - and with what purpose?

Your group should not try to answer such questions today. But the school's efforts to answer these and kindred questions effectively would be enhanced if you could articulate what you see as the school's fundamental mission in the area of religious practice and prayer. With this in mind, here are some basic kinds of questions you might want to consider:

What does the ideal graduate "do" in the domain of religious practice?

In the area of religious practice and prayer, should the school limit itself to "teaching about" such matters -- or should it also be trying to instill certain attitudes, practices, and skills? If the latter, which ones and why?

What things do you think it's not appropriate for your kind of school to try to nurture - and how should it handle those matters? e.g. ignoring them? teaching a range of views, and encouraging students to decide for themselves? etc.

Helpful as it is to ask what you would consider a "successful" outcome or range of outcomes in this domain, it may also be helpful to ask: what kinds of outcomes you would represent an educational failure on the part of the institution?

## ISRAEL

What attitudes towards Israel does the school hope to nurture in its graduates? What kinds of knowledge? What ways of relating to Israel?

How does the school understand the importance of Israel -- the fount of a flourishing national culture? a haven from persecution? the beginnings of our promised Redemption? the setting in which the spiritual, ethical, and religious life of the Jewish People can best be fulfilled? Is Israel the Spiritual Center of the Jewish People? a place in which many Jews live?

Is Aliya desirable, okay, or to be frowned on - and why?

Does the school wish to nurture beliefs, understandings, attitudes concerning such matters as a) the place of religion in Israeli life, b) Israel's relations with Palestinians, c) the role of non-Israelis in influencing the course of Israeli life?

How would you hope Atlanta-based graduates of your school would in practice express their relationship to Israel?

How does the successful graduate's relationship to Israel affect his or her relationship to America?

Does the school represent a perspective on the ideal relationship between Israel and the Diaspora?

## HISTORY

How will the graduate of this school define his/her relationship to the Jewish past? Is the past a source of our identity? Is it a way of understanding the challenges of the present? Is it something we have liberated ourselves from? Is it evidence of our special place in the cosmos? A way of reinforcing a commitment to diversity?

What parts of Jewish history -- what periods, what geographical regions, what cultures --should receive the greatest emphasis, and how does this reflect the school's basic aims?

In looking at Jewish history, should the emphasis be on the way our ancestors lived, on their ideas, on their relationship to the

surrounding culture?

Should Jewish history be taught as a part of general history or separately - and what educational aims are at work in your answer to this question?

Should the school avoid studies of history which call into question traditionally accepted views of the Jewish past, e.g. the historicity of Biblical characters?

Most generally, why do you think you should be teaching Jewish history? What aims (understandings, attitudes, etc.) do you hope to accomplish through this teaching?

#### THE MORNING'S SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The morning session that will involve small groups will include the following elements:

a. Everyone present will be asked to write out some thoughts concerning each of the following questions:

1. If you were really serious about developing facility in Hebrew, what would you have the school doing?
2. If you were really serious about fostering a love of Israel founded on an appreciation of its importance, what would you have the school doing?

b. In small groups, guided by the facilitators, participants would be invited to share what they came up with in response to these questions.

c. The facilitator's job, in addition to steering this process of sharing, will be to note the range of responses and, equally important, to take note of questions, issues, concerns that arise in the process. The facilitator should be prepared to bring these back to the group as a whole.

d. When we reconvene as a large group, Pekarsky will try to get a sense of what the groups have come up with. Drawing, where relevant, on concerns raised by them, he will try to highlight what was adequate and inadequate in the initial formulation of the assignment, as well as in their response to the assignment. Through examination of this case, it is hoped that participants will develop a list of criteria than an adequate educational aim needs to satisfy. This should serve them as useful background for the

afternoon's small group activity.

Please note that I am not at all sure that facilitators need to be aware of d); in fact, I'm a bit concerned that it might contaminate what they do in c).

That's it for now. Steve Chervin and I have a conversation scheduled for Friday at which time any last-minute concerns relating to this (or to anything else) can be addressed. I look forward to meeting all of you in person!





# ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION

1753 PEACHTREE ROAD, NE/ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309/404-873-1661/FAX 404-874-7043

## FAX COVER PAGE

TO: Alan Hoffmann, Barry Holt DATE: Feb. 10, 1995  
 FROM: Steve Chasen FAX#: (312) 532-7646  
 # OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER PAGE) 4

- ☒ Please deliver immediately.  
☐ Please make appropriate copies and distribute.  
☐ This document is a continuation of an interrupted transmission.  
☐ Other comments:

Revised schedule for the day. See  
 you Sunday at 7:15 A.M. Call me at home  
 if you need to at (404) 551-0094.  
 SC

**If you do not receive all the pages, please call (404) 873-1661**

*The Atlanta Jewish Federation is on the behalf of the 78,000 member Jewish community. It is the primary fund-raising, budgeting, social planning and community relations body for the Atlanta Jewish community. Supporting social and humanitarian programs, Federation oversees the quality of lives for Jews locally, in Israel, and in 36 countries throughout the world.*

**NEW JEWISH DAY HIGH SCHOOL****Sunday, Feb. 12, 1995****Greenfield Hebrew Academy**

- |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>8:30-9:00 A.M.</b>    | <b>Welcome and Refreshments</b>                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>9:00-9:30 A.M.</b>    | <b>Introduction of the Program and Leaders<br/>(whole group)</b>                                                                                                                       |
| <b>9:30-10:30 A.M.</b>   | <b>First Break-Out Session (small groups)</b><br>Anchoring goals in a vision of the kind of graduates<br>and community we are hoping to develop                                        |
| <b>10:30-10:45 A.M.</b>  | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>10:45 -11:45 A.M.</b> | <b>The Power of Guiding Visions (whole group)</b>                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>11:45-12:30 P.M.</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>12:30-1:00 P.M.</b>   | <b>Orientation to the Afternoon's Work<br/>(whole group)</b>                                                                                                                           |
| <b>1:00-2:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Second Break-Out Session (small groups)</b><br>Five themes will be explored: (a) Prayer and religious<br>practices; (b) Jewish texts; (c) Hebrew; (d) Jewish<br>history; (e) Israel |
| <b>2:00-2:15 P.M.</b>    | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>2:15-3:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Reviewing the Findings of the Small Groups<br/>(whole group)</b>                                                                                                                    |
| <b>3:00-3:45 P.M.</b>    | <b>Concluding the Day (whole group)</b><br>Identification of areas of agreement and disagreement,<br>areas for further exploration, and discussion of next<br>steps                    |
| <b>3:45-4:00 P.M.</b>    | <b>Evaluation of the Day</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
-

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FEB 21 1995

Leasing  
•  
Development  
•  
Management

13 February 1995

Mr. Morton Mandel  
Chairman  
Council for Initiatives in  
Jewish Education  
Post Office Box 94553  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

Dear Mr. Mandel:

I am part of a core group of people in Atlanta, Georgia that is starting a community high school for Jewish children. This past weekend we held an all day seminar to help frame central issues that will be encountered in starting this school. Alan Hoffmann and the rest of the staff from CIJE were instrumental in helping us put together a program that was, by all accounts, very informative and successful.

CIJE implemented seminars for sixty to seventy people who, almost uniformly, agreed that the questions raised and the manner in which they were addressed were of the utmost importance and will ultimately be referred back to again and again in our quest for starting this school.

From a strategic standpoint, I can honestly say that the presence and involvement of the CIJE staff has been, and will be, extremely important for getting this school off to a strong start. By associating ourselves with this extremely professional group, prospective parents are given a sense of comfort that they wouldn't ordinarily have received if we, in the community, had undertaken this event by ourselves. As you may know, one of the things that is often heard when starting a high school is that it is easier to gain a parent's trust for primary school than for high school. The involvement of CIJE lends credibility to our endeavor that never could be obtained otherwise.

Letter to Mr. Morton Mandel  
13 February 1995  
Page Two

As chairman and benefactor of this most important undertaking, I encourage you to redouble your efforts in this arena because the results of your work now will be felt for generations to come.

I look forward to seeing you at our first graduation in the year 2001.

Sincerely,



Steve Berman

SB:cj



**MORTON L. MANDEL**

4500 EUCLID AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

copy: *Neena  
Ramy  
fail  
SL*

February 23, 1995

Dear Steve:

Thank you very much for writing me your nice note about what the CIJE is doing to help Atlanta be a stronger community.

CIJE is proving to be the right organization in the right place at the right time. As a founder I am very pleased to get your kind of reaction to the work of CIJE.

I wish you continuing success in your efforts.

Sincerely,



MORTON L. MANDEL

Mr. Steve Berman  
Office Associates, Inc.  
2751 Buford Highway, N.E.  
Suite 800  
Atlanta, GA 30324

cc: Alan Hoffman





## ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION

February 28, 1995

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*First Vice President*

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*Assistant Secretaries*

ELIOT M. ARNOVITZ  
*Campaign Chairman*

DAVID I. SARNAT  
*Executive Director*

Alan Hoffmann  
Executive Director, CIJE  
15 East 26 Street  
New York, NY 10010-1579

Dear Alan,

I wanted to thank you and the CIJE team for all of your work on behalf of the planning process for a second high school in Atlanta. The goals retreat was an unqualified success, with very positive evaluations from the participants. Those of us who helped organize the event felt that the retreat succeeded not only in dramatizing the importance of generating a vision, but also in revealing a high level of consensus about the goals for the proposed school.

You and the rest of the CIJE staff and consultants handled the program with a level of sensitivity and thought that was apparent to all who participated. We appreciate the great help you provided to us, as we continue the process of articulating the Jewish character of the school. We welcome any future involvement you may have with us in this exciting venture.

Sincerely,

Steven Chervin

cc: Dr. Barry Holtz  
Dr. Daniel Pekarsky  
Mr. Dan Marom  
Mr. Michael Rosenzweig

SURVEY FOR JEWISH RESIDENTIAL ACADEMY GRADES 9-12

1. The double curriculum of the school - both general and Judaic subjects - will be very taxing. The school day might well extend to 8-10 hours. This would include a sports period.

Would you agree to this? YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

2. The double objective of the school is to enable its graduates to apply successfully for admission to the best universities in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world; and also to emerge with a deep knowledge of Bible, Jewish history, religion, Hebrew language and modern Israel. The quality of such a curriculum will be extremely demanding. There will be homework, in addition to the hours indicated in question 1.

Would you agree to this? YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

3. The mandatory athletic program will be broad enough to absorb all students, according to their choice of team activities or individual sports. Time allocated is 1 1/2 hours per day, 5 days per week.

Agree? YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

4. Extra-curricular activities will include drama club, dance ensemble, orchestra and band, school paper, fine arts, debating, school government, foreign language clubs, scientific hobbies, anything else that a group of students would want. All students will be urged and encouraged to participate.

Worthwhile to devote time to this? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. One semester would be spent in Israel, probably the first semester of the 10th grade, which would begin with an acclimitization (ulpan) period in the summer between 9th and 10th grades.

Would you be in favor of this? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. In the general American population, there is a certain socio-economic class which has always enrolled its children in private boarding schools, often some distance from home. In the American-Jewish community, this is just starting to happen.

Would you be willing to enroll your child in a school away from home for the sake of the advantages the school offered?  
YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



7. If you said NO to the previous question, would your answer be different if the school were reasonably close to home? Elapsed time (including flight and/or surface transportation):

2 hours YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

1 1/2 hours YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

1 hour YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Andover and Exeter school fees this year are \$18,500 to \$19,500. This includes tuition, room and board.

Would you be willing to pay this fee,

a.) if financially able..... pay in full YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

b.) if requiring financial aid..... pay 50% YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

c.) if requiring even more aid..... pay 25% YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

Comments\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What aspect(s) of the school would make you enthusiastic about sending your child?

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What aspect(s) would make you hesitant about sending your child?

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional notes:**

1. It is hoped that faculty will live on campus.
2. Special science programs for Westinghouse candidates.
3. Nurse and infirmary on campus.
4. College counselling service.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Fax to: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman  
(212) 751-3739

March 8, 1995

Atlanta

## ROGERS &amp; HARDIN

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

## CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE:

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FROM: Michael RosenzweigNUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER LETTER) 2COMMENTS:

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May 22, 1995

VIA FACSIMILE (216-391-5430)  
AND U.S. MAILMr. Morton L. Mandel  
Chair  
Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education  
P.O. Box 94553  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

Dear Mort:


Thanks so much for your thoughtful note of May 11 and your letter of May 19, 1995 enclosing minutes from the CIJE board meeting last month.

We are very excited about the high school initiative and, as I said at the board meeting, our work has been most significantly advanced by CIJE's invaluable assistance. I was delighted to be invited to the board meeting and to have a chance to meet with members of the board informally throughout the day. Thank you again for including me.

I look forward to our continued work together.

Warm regards.

Very truly yours,



Michael Rosenzweig

MR/dru

cc: Mr. Alan Hoffmann (via facsimile 212-532-2646)

Atlanta  
File

MEMORANDUM

TO: Yossi Prager  
Avi Chai Foundation

FROM: Steve Berman  
Steve Chervin  
Michael Rosenzweig

DATE: August 3, 1995

RE: New Atlanta Jewish Community High School

---

In connection with our discussions with you regarding the current effort to create a new Jewish high school in Atlanta, we thought it might be useful to provide you with a memorandum describing our efforts to date and setting forth, in preliminary form, a conceptual framework pursuant to which the Avi Chai Foundation might assist in those efforts.

The high school project has captured the imagination of the entire Atlanta Jewish community and has generated a truly extraordinary level of excitement. The project has been embraced by Federation and has the enthusiastic support of the leadership, both lay and professional, of the Greenfield Hebrew Academy, the Epstein School and the Davis Academy. In addition, there is a broad consensus among Atlanta's rabbinate that our community needs a new day high school. There is, in short, strong agreement among Atlanta's Jews that we must create a compellingly attractive Jewish community high school that will enroll the hundreds of Jewish children who now end their Jewish education after 8th grade, if indeed they get that far.

I. Background.

In late 1991, a group of Atlanta Jews, mostly individuals who were deeply involved in day school education, began a conversation that continues to this day. These individuals, concerned about alarming rates of assimilation and intermarriage among American Jewry, recognized that high school represents a uniquely important stage in a child's intellectual and spiritual development -- a stage at which, for the first time, the child begins to think critically and independently as an adult. These individuals also recognized the unassailable truth, embraced generally by Jewish educators, that Jewish day high school is far more important than elementary and middle school in shaping the intellectual and religious orientation that will guide a child

into and throughout adulthood. As leaders in Atlanta's day school movement, however, these individuals also recognized an inescapable and depressing reality: while very substantial numbers of our children attend our day schools through grade 8, seemingly providing a steady supply of likely candidates for a Jewish high school education, amazingly few in fact go on to high school. To these individuals, this represented an enormous missed opportunity. The longer this conversation continued the more these individuals became convinced that they had an obligation, indeed a sacred responsibility, to change that depressing reality. This group, an ad hoc, unofficial, grassroots movement, therefore set out to chart a course for convincing large numbers of Atlanta's Jewish children and their parents to embrace the idea of Jewish day high school.

In late spring of 1992, this group convinced Federation to convene a Task Force on High School Education. The Task Force worked diligently for over a year, consulting Jewish educational experts, collecting pertinent data, conducting market studies, making site visits to high schools in other cities and interviewing scores of parents, students, educators and community leaders. In August of 1993, the Task Force delivered its final report to Federation, concluding that (1) Atlanta should offer a viable day high school education for all Jewish children in our community; (2) there is a demand for a community high school committed to diversity and pluralism, as well as respect for heritage and tradition; and (3) plans to develop a new community Jewish high school should move forward.

For approximately the next year, supporters of the high school idea did a great deal of quiet, but important, homework. We consulted extensively with educators and rabbis, both locally and nationally, and also conducted informal parlor meetings with parents of potential students. This was an especially significant period, because it demonstrated clearly that our work was sparking tremendous interest, not only in Atlanta but in all of North America as well. We discovered, in short, that other communities were also engaged in similar undertakings and that many had heard of our efforts and were looking to Atlanta as a model.

By this time, Atlanta had been chosen by the prestigious Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education as one of three lead communities in Jewish education in North America. This designation meant that we had a kind of official imprimatur as a leader and model in Jewish education and, practically speaking, it meant that CIJE, which operates on a national and international stage, had an official and intense interest in Jewish educational initiatives in Atlanta. As a natural outgrowth of CIJE's interest in Atlanta, the high school group,

in late 1994, began consulting with CIJE and its Executive Director, Alan Hoffmann.

With the help of CIJE and its professional staff, in February of this year, we held a day-long retreat in which approximately 75 community representatives participated. The retreat was truly extraordinary, in both its purpose and its accomplishments. We set out, quite self-consciously, to examine in detail what we meant when we said that we wanted to create a Jewish high school. That is, rather than look first at any of the other myriad and important questions we might have tackled -- site, physical plant, funding, etc. -- we determined that the critical first question to be addressed was the Jewish character of our school. Accordingly, we spent an entire Sunday -- from 8:30 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon -- examining five core areas in the Judaics curriculum (Hebrew, Israel, Jewish text, Jewish history and prayer and religious practice), with a view to determining areas of agreement, disagreement and indeterminacy regarding the place of each in our new school. What was perhaps most inspiring about the retreat was the amazing passion and seriousness of purpose that the group displayed. Only slightly less exciting was the substantive product that emerged: the makings of a philosophy statement for the school, and a core group of passionate supporters of the high school who ultimately became the school's Steering Committee.

Since the February retreat, a great deal has occurred. In March, we retained and spent four days consulting with Independent School Management, the premier private school consulting firm in the United States. ISM conducted a further feasibility study and held additional interviews with community leaders, parents, local public school officials and representatives for both the day schools and other independent schools in Atlanta. ISM validated our plan to open the school in the fall of 1997 and made specific, detailed recommendations regarding the overall planning process, including choosing a Head of School, creating a board and committee structure, designing the administrative structure of the school, developing financial resources, refining the philosophy statement, recruiting faculty, selecting a site and marketing the school.

Later in March, we held a community forum at which our keynote speaker was Rabbi Daniel Gordis of the University of Judaism. Over 150 people attended, and the evening confirmed the broad support for this project in the community.

Since March, the Steering Committee has been involved in organizing itself and beginning to formulate a strategic plan. At the February retreat, when asked to identify our priorities, most participants strongly recommended that we focus first on the

MR 89544.1 -- 6090.000

school's philosophy and mission and thereafter on recruiting a Head of School and fund raising. The Steering Committee has followed that template in its work.

In April, the Steering Committee constituted a subcommittee to draft a statement of philosophy for the school. The subcommittee, designed to be broadly representative of the interested constituencies in our community, devoted many hours to this challenge and produced a powerful statement that eloquently and compellingly describes the unique school we are striving to create. A draft of the philosophy statement is attached to this memorandum.

The Steering Committee then addressed both the fund-raising and Head-of-School issues. We determined that we would need sufficient seed money to recruit and retain a Head of School no later than the fall of 1996, giving that person at least a year to recruit faculty, design the school's curriculum and further shape the school's mission and philosophy. Our calculations suggested that we need \$400,000, over half of which has already been raised. A Search Committee, chaired by Rabbi Arnold Goodman, Senior Rabbi of Ahavath Achim Synagogue (the largest conservative synagogue in our community), has been constituted and will soon begin its work in earnest.

During this period, the Steering Committee recognized the need for a more formal structure and strategic plan. Accordingly, we incorporated the New Atlanta Jewish Community High School, Inc. as a Georgia nonprofit corporation and are currently seeking tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Steering Committee has now become the initial Board of Directors of this new entity. In addition, after a careful search process, we have determined to retain Independent School Management as our outside consultants to work with us in developing a formal, comprehensive strategic plan over the next two years. The entire board and the search committee will be meeting over two days in mid-September with the Founder and President of ISM.

## II. A Role for the Avi Chai Foundation: Conceptual Framework.

Our conversations with you suggest that Avi Chai has identified the creation of Jewish day high schools in North America as a critically important item on the Jewish continuity agenda. We perceive that Avi Chai recognizes that creating community day high schools across the United States and Canada is an enormous challenge, presenting complicated and difficult questions regarding personnel, curriculum, school philosophy and the like. Nevertheless, we believe that our project may present

NR 89544.1 -- 6090.000



Avi Chai with an opportunity to model a role for itself that may then be applied nationally, while of course substantially assisting our efforts in Atlanta.

Clearly, as indicated above, we have accomplished a great deal and are well on our way to opening our school in the fall of 1997. Between now and then, however, a great deal remains to be done. Specifically, we have considerable work to do in two areas that also strike us as necessary areas of focus for efforts by other communities to create Jewish day high schools: (1) philosophy and goals; and (2) personnel.

In our view, in order to succeed, we must create a different kind of school. Our school must be compellingly attractive to very large numbers of Jewish students and their parents, while requiring a rigorous devotion to serious Jewish learning. In order to accomplish this task, we require considered, reflective, thoughtful deliberation and elaboration regarding the school's mission and philosophy. We believe we have made a good start; we also believe that much remains to be done.

Similarly, we do not minimize the difficulty we expect to face in identifying and recruiting a first-rate Judaics faculty. While we have been contacted by numbers of potentially interested candidates, we perceive that we must develop a cogent strategic approach to recruiting Judaics faculty if we are to succeed.

The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education has indicated an interest in continuing to help us as we move toward creation of our school. Specifically, CIJE, like Avi Chai, is interested in Jewish day high school generally, and has indicated informally that Atlanta might serve as a kind of pilot program for addressing issues, such as philosophy and faculty recruitment, that will necessarily be central for other communities attempting to create such schools. It occurs to us that the success of such a pilot program could be significantly enhanced through Avi Chai's participation with CIJE. In short, we envision a kind of partnership between Avi Chai and CIJE in Atlanta, helping us address these two critically important areas. We believe that what we learn in Atlanta, if appropriately documented, recorded and analyzed, can be of great value to others involved in similar efforts. At the same time, an Atlanta partnership between Avi Chai and CIJE, on a pilot basis, could perhaps be replicated nationally if successful here.

In sum, we imagine an experimental partnership between Avi Chai and CIJE in Atlanta, to the end of helping us develop appropriate strategies for addressing philosophy and faculty recruitment, while perhaps yielding valuable insights for the national community high school effort as well.

### III. Conclusion.

We believe that we are on the verge of creating something unique and truly remarkable in the world of Jewish education. Those of us who have been privileged to work on this project agree that it is the most exciting work that we have ever done. We in Atlanta are truly experiencing history in the making. We would welcome further discussions with you, so that we may explore together a possible role for Avi Chai in this exciting undertaking.

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**NAJCHS**  
**Mission Statement**  
**October 18, 1995**

Our mission is to prepare students for knowledgeable, thinking, responsible Jewish adulthood. We will help students to become strong, creative individuals who find personal fulfillment in reaching out to others, assuming leadership in the Jewish Community and establishing meaningful and productive careers.

## NEW ATLANTA JEWISH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL Philosophy

The New Atlanta Jewish Community High School integrates an open, critical focus on Jewish tradition at the secondary level with a deep engagement with the classical liberal arts. It is not only a new educational institution; it is a new *kind* of institution. The School reflects the mosaic of Atlanta Jewry, with its full spectrum of Jewish philosophies, beliefs and practices. It is an independent school, unaffiliated with any one Jewish movement, yet embracing them all. We welcome students from all Jewish backgrounds and affiliations.

The School is committed to providing students with a firm grounding in Torah -- denoting the sum total of all Jewish learning -- while providing the best of a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory program. Students will gain the knowledge, skills, and values that emerge from Jewish texts and tradition -- including command of the Hebrew language -- as well as those found in the texts and traditions of world civilization.

We will produce graduates who can think critically, logically and independently; articulate their thoughts and opinions clearly; cooperate with others for the sake of common goals; take risks; and defend just, though unpopular, positions. We will give students increasing responsibility for making decisions that affect them, planning extra-curricular activities, initiating school projects, organizing clubs and advising on school policies, thereby communicating a vital message to each student: *You* make a difference; every person counts.

We will emphasize active methods of learning that stimulate students' own imaginations and creative expression, encouraging them to inquire and discover on their own. Through experiential learning, community service and social action projects, students will become involved in solving the real-life problems of the world around them. The School will combine traditional and modern modes of inquiry; new forms of technology will be absorbed both as a means and an end to learning.

The School's ultimate goal is to prepare students for knowledgeable, thinking, responsible Jewish adulthood. We will help our students become strong, creative individuals who find personal fulfillment in reaching out to others, assuming leadership in the Jewish Community and establishing meaningful and productive careers. By emphasizing Mitzvot and Jewish values, we will teach our students to live a moral life. Through our uncompromising commitment to academic excellence, we will teach the skills necessary for success in college and beyond.

TO: Alan Hoffmann

FROM: Steve Chervin

DATE: Oct. 18, 1995  
24 Tishri 5756

Hope everything is going well for you. We all missed you at the last Lead Community meetings in NY.

I wanted to let you know that Rabbi Arnold Goodman, Chair of the Director Search Committee for the New Atlanta Jewish Community High School, will be in Israel awaiting the birth of his newest grand child, from November 22 through mid-December. He would be available to meet with any candidates for the position that you think are appropriate during this time. Would you let me know if there are any people that you think he should meet with, and what their background/qualifications are? I would appreciate it. Thanks.

# DRAFT

## NEW ATLANTA JEWISH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

### Philosophy

The New Atlanta Jewish Community High School is not only a new educational institution; it is a new *kind* of institution. The School will combine a liberal, critical approach to Jewish tradition at the secondary level, along with a deep engagement with the classical liberal arts. It is thus committed to providing students with a *firm* grounding in Torah - denoting the sum total of all Jewish learning - at the same time as it provides the best of a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory program. The School will teach the knowledge, skills, and values that emerge both from Jewish texts and tradition, as well as the texts and traditions of world civilization.

We will aim to produce graduates who are able to think critically, logically, and independently; articulate their thoughts and opinions clearly; compromise with others for the sake of common goals; take risks; and defend just, though unpopular positions. We will give students increasing responsibility for making decisions that affect them, in planning extra-curricular activities, initiating school projects, organizing clubs, advising on school policies, participating in decision-making, etc. in order to communicate a vital message to each student: you can make a difference, every person counts.

We will emphasize active methods of learning that stimulate students' own imaginations and creative expression, and encourage them to inquire and discover things on their own. Through experiential learning, community service, and social action projects, students will become involved in solving the real-life problems of the world around them. The School will combine both traditional modes of inquiry, along with modern study methods. New forms of technology will be absorbed into the School both as a means and an end to learning.

The ultimate purpose of the School will be to develop our students' self-esteem while preparing them to become knowledgeable, thinking, responsible adults. We will do this by promoting a sense of *menschlichkeit*, or character development: i.e.

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helping students grow into adults who find personal meaning and fulfillment in using their skills, talents and creativity to enlighten the lives of others. Mitzvot and Jewish values provide the guidelines for teaching our students to live a moral life.

# ***NAJCHS, Inc.***

*New Atlanta Jewish Community High School*

November 21, 1995

Mr. Alan Hoffman  
Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education  
15 East 26th Street, 10th Floor  
New York, New York 10010-1579

**RE: New Atlanta Jewish Community High School --  
Search for Head of School**

Dear Alan:

We are writing to solicit your help. For nearly four years, a group of dedicated parents and Jewish professionals in Atlanta has been planning a new Jewish community high school. We now expect to open the doors of the new school in the fall of 1997 and are **currently searching for a Head of School** for this exciting new institution. If you are interested, or know of an appropriate candidate who would be interested, in this extraordinary opportunity, please let us hear from you at your earliest convenience.

## **Application Process**

We will be accepting applications until **December 31, 1995** and expect to interview qualified candidates in January and February of 1996, with a view to **completing our selection process by February 29, 1996**. Our goal is to have our Head of School in place no later than the fall of 1996, so that he or she will have a full year prior to the school's opening to develop the school's curriculum, recruit faculty and students and, generally, become established in the Atlanta Jewish community as the school's identifiable leader, ambassador and representative.

## **The Atlanta Jewish Community**

Atlanta is emerging as a vital center of Jewish life in North America. We have 25 synagogues and five Jewish day schools, including an existing Orthodox high school. Our community is in the midst of an unprecedented period of growth and development. Each of our day schools, with the exception of the existing high school, is either completing or involved in a major capital campaign. Our Federation, which serves Atlanta's nearly 75,000 Jews, is about to move to new headquarters that will also house a state-of-the-art Jewish heritage museum. We were recently designated one of three lead communities in Jewish education by the prestigious Council for Initiatives in Jewish



November 21, 1995

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Education and are widely known as a community that recognizes the critical importance of Jewish education for the contemporary Jewish agenda. Numbers of senior Jewish educators and professionals have come to Atlanta in recent years, confirming our increasing attractiveness as a vibrant Jewish center. We are proud of our rapid growth as a Jewish community, paralleling the exciting growth of Atlanta generally, sustained by our traditions of excellence and distinction.

### Background

In late spring of 1992, our Federation convened a Task Force on High School Education. The Task Force was charged with examining day school education both within Atlanta and in other communities, with a view to determining whether our community needed a second Jewish high school. The Task Force worked diligently for a year, collecting and analyzing information, making site visits to Jewish high schools around the country and conducting (with the assistance of a consultant) a preliminary marketing study based on discussions with over 130 students, parents, educators and community leaders.

In August of 1993, the Federation Task Force delivered its final report to Federation, which included the following conclusions:

1. Atlanta should offer a "viable day high school education for all Jewish children within our community;"
2. There is demand in Atlanta for an alternative to the existing Orthodox high school; and
3. Plans to develop a new Jewish high school should move forward.

Between the fall of 1993 and the fall of 1994, supporters of a new high school consulted with numerous educators and rabbis, both locally and from outside Atlanta, and with parents of potential students. Based on these conversations, we drafted an initial mission statement for our school.

In February of 1995, 75 community leaders, long active in Jewish education in Atlanta, participated in a day-long retreat designed to explore and clarify the Jewish character of the new school we hoped to create. Led by staff of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, participants identified areas of consensus, as well as issues that required further discussion, regarding the role of Hebrew, Israel, Jewish text, Jewish history and prayer and religious practice in the new school. This

retreat critically shaped the direction the school would take, and through the passion and seriousness of purpose displayed that day, two substantive products emerged: the makings of a philosophy statement for the school and a core group of supporters who would become the school's Steering Committee and, later, its initial Board of Directors.

In March of 1995, the school's Steering Committee spent four days consulting with Independent School Management, the premier private school consulting firm in the United States. ISM conducted a feasibility study and held interviews with community leaders, parents, local public school officials and representatives of both day schools and other independent schools in Atlanta. ISM validated our plan to open the school in the fall of 1997 and made specific recommendations regarding selection of a Head of School, creation of a board structure, design of the school's administrative structure, development of financial resources, faculty recruitment, site selection, marketing and development of a mission and philosophy statement.

Later in March, we held a community forum at which our keynote speaker was Rabbi Daniel Gordis, currently Dean of the new rabbinical school at the University of Judaism. Over 150 people attended this event and demonstrated a heartening and broad community support for our undertaking.

In recent months, our Board constituted a Search Committee to identify and recruit a Head of School and also debated and adopted philosophy and mission statements defining the direction in which we hope to move.

### Philosophy of School

As our philosophy statement (a copy of which is enclosed for your information) indicates, in our new school we expect to integrate an open, critical focus on Jewish tradition with a deep engagement with the classical liberal arts. We hope to create not only a new educational institution, but a new *kind of* institution, one that will reflect the mosaic of Atlanta Jewry, with its full spectrum of Jewish philosophies, beliefs and practices. We will be an independent school, unaffiliated with any one Jewish movement, yet embracing them all, welcoming students from all Jewish backgrounds and affiliations.

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Most importantly, the school will be committed to providing students with a firm grounding in Torah -- denoting the sum total of all Jewish learning -- while providing the best of a rigorous and comprehensive college preparatory program. Our central mission will be to prepare students for knowledgeable, thinking, responsible Jewish adulthood.

\* \* \*

Our undertaking is exciting and, we believe, path-breaking. We know that to succeed, we must attract a Head of School of extraordinary talent and experience, one who has a proven record of success in the Jewish educational world. We are determined to create a unique center of Jewish learning, and we believe that our Head of School will have an opportunity to make a lasting and meaningful contribution to the world of Jewish education and, thereby, to the perpetuation of a vital Diaspora Jewry.

Submission of Applications

Please submit applications or indications of interest to Rabbi Arnold Goodman, Chair, Search Committee, NAJCHS, Inc., 2221 Peachtree Street, N.E., Suite D-334, Atlanta, Georgia 30309.

Very truly yours,



Michael Rosenzweig  
Chair, Board of Directors



Rabbi Arnold Goodman  
Chair, Search Committee

## To Our Readers



Welcome to the premier issue of *Kolot*. We have created this newsletter to communicate with you regularly, as we move toward the opening of the New Atlanta Jewish Community High School in the fall of 1997.

Our principal activity at the moment is our search for a Head of School; Rabbi Arnold Goodman, Chair of the Search Committee, reports elsewhere in this newsletter on the progress of his committee. We have already generated national attention from such prestigious organizations as The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education and The Wexner Heritage Foundation, and a number of truly impressive candidates have indicated an interest in becoming the School's educational leader. Thus, while we have much work to do before we open our doors — determining the School's initial site, recruiting faculty, developing curriculum, etc. — we have every reason to believe that we will succeed.

Our aim is to create a compellingly attractive Jewish community high school that will enroll the hundreds of Jewish children who now end their Jewish education at the eighth grade (if they proceed even to that point). Our undertaking is exciting and, indeed, path-breaking, for we intend to create (in the words of our philosophy statement) not only a new educational institution, but a new kind of institution, one that will reflect the mosaic of Atlanta Jewry, with its full spectrum of Jewish philosophies, beliefs and practices. We thus have the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to the world of Jewish education and, thereby, to the perpetuation of a vital Diaspora Jewry.

We invite each of you to join our effort to create a unique center of Jewish learning. In the coming months, we will be hosting a series of parlor meetings, so that we can learn from you the kind of high school you and your children want and report to you in detail regarding our progress.

Our goal is ambitious and will require serious commitment from each of you. Those of us who have been privileged to work on this project agree that it is the most fulfilling work that we have ever done. I invite you to embrace this dream with us!



Michael Rosenzweig  
Chair, Board of Directors

*Michael Rosenzweig*

## A Community Creating History

### Spring 1992

Federation convenes a Task Force on High School Education to determine whether our community needs a second Jewish high school. Examining day school education in Atlanta and elsewhere, the Task Force works diligently for over a year, carefully collecting and analyzing data.

### Fall 1992

Members of the Task Force make site visits to seven Jewish high schools. Visits emphasize the importance of having an excellent general studies program, with a text-based Judaic studies curriculum.

### May 1993

The Task Force commissions a preliminary marketing study involving focus groups and interviews with 130 students, parents, educators and leaders in our community. The study concludes that there is a substantial market for a second Jewish high school in Atlanta.

### August 1993

The Task Force delivers its final report to Federation, which includes the following conclusions: 1) Atlanta should offer a viable day high school education for all Jewish children within our community; 2) There is a demand for an alternative to complement the existing Orthodox high school; and 3) Plans to develop a new Jewish high school should move forward.

### Fall 1993 - Fall 1994

The idea germinates in the community. Supporters of a new high school consult with numerous educators and rabbis, both locally and outside Atlanta, and with parents of potential students. An initial mission statement is drafted.

### February 1995

Seventy-five community representatives participate in a retreat designed to explore and clarify the Jewish character of the new school. Led by the nationally recognized Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, participants identify areas of consensus, as well as issues that require further discussion, regarding the role of Hebrew, Israel, Jewish text, Jewish history and prayer and religious practices in the new school.

Importantly, two products emerge: the makings of a philosophy statement and a core group of supporters who would become the school's Steering Committee and, later, its initial Board of Directors.

### March 1995

The Steering Committee consults with Independent School Management, the premier private school consulting firm in the United States. ISM conducts a feasibility study that includes interviews with community leaders, focus groups with parents and data collection on three feeder schools (The Davis Academy, Greenfield Hebrew Academy, and The Epstein School), local public schools and other independent schools. ISM endorses the plan to open the school in the fall of 1997 and makes recommendations regarding specifics of the planning process.

A community forum is held at Congregation B'nai Torah featuring keynote speaker Rabbi Daniel Gordis, Dean of the new rabbinical school at the University of Judaism. Over 150 people attend, demonstrating strong community support for the new school.

### Summer 1995

The essential organizational structure is created: the Board of Directors formally incorporates; a search committee is convened, chaired by Rabbi Arnold Goodman; a final Philosophy Statement is drafted and ISM is hired to serve as ongoing consultant.

### September 1995

Independent School Management conducts a day-long workshop with the Search Committee, during which the profile of the ideal candidate and the key features of a job description emerge. A half-day workshop with the Board of Directors is also held in which the Search Committee work plan is endorsed and discussion begins regarding the administrative structure required to ensure a thorough process once the Head of School is hired.

### October 1995

Deliberative planning continues: The Board of Directors approves final philosophy and mission statements and a Marketing Plan designed to facilitate a partnership with the community in creating the school. The Search Committee disseminates an information package to a wide network of interested constituents soliciting candidates for the Head of School position.

### Fall 1997

Classes begin at the New Atlanta Jewish Community High School.

## Commonly Asked Questions

### Where will the school be located?

We are considering several locations for our initial site. We are committed to identifying a site that is convenient to the greater Atlanta Jewish community and that offers amenities appropriate to a dynamic high school program. We will not need permanent facilities initially, nor do we wish at this time to burden the community with the capital requirements necessary to acquire such facilities.

### What kind of curriculum is planned?

Specific decisions regarding curriculum will be deferred until we have hired our Head of School. The Board feels strongly that curricular decisions should be made only with the leadership of an experienced educator. Thus, while the Board has charted the School's course in the broadest sense by agreeing on a philosophy statement, we have intentionally refrained from attempting to resolve curricular issues.



## Search Under Way for Head of School

I am pleased to report to you that our Search Committee is hard at work, as we move toward hiring our Head of School by the spring of 1996. With the able assistance of our consultant Rod Snelling, President of Independent School Management, we have formulated a detailed description of the Head of School position. We and the Board have agreed that our Head of School will be an experienced educator/administrator with outstanding credentials in Jewish scholarship. While the Head of School need not be a rabbi, he or she must be an exceptional Jewish educator, with a proven record of success in the Jewish educational world.

The mandate to the Search Committee is to have the Head of School in place by the fall of 1996, a year prior to the School's 1997 opening, so that he or she may have time to develop the School's curriculum and recruit faculty and students.

We have begun our search by disseminating widely throughout the Jewish world (both in North America and internationally) an information package describing the School's philosophy, the history of our efforts to create the school and the sort of candidate we wish to attract. We have already heard from a number of wonderfully qualified candidates who share our enthusiasm regarding Atlanta's emergence as an important Jewish community. Given the attractiveness of Atlanta, both Jewishly and as a major economic and industrial center, we are confident that we will succeed in recruiting a truly exceptional Head of School.

The committee expects to begin interviewing candidates after the first of the year. I am pleased to report to you that the following individuals have agreed to serve on the Search Committee.

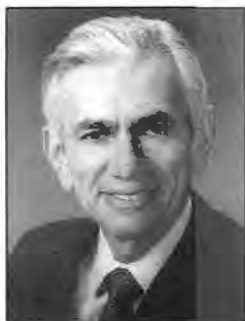
Mollie Azriel  
Dr. David R. Blumenthal  
Dr. Steve Chervin  
Gerald Cohen - *ex officio*  
Bob Cook  
Dr. Teo Forcht Dagi  
Cheryl Finkel  
Rabbi Arnold Goodman - *Chair*

Lynne Halpern  
Francine Kersh  
Shai Robkin  
Michael Rosenzweig  
Rabbi Bill Rothschild  
Rabbi Donald Tam  
Dr. Richard Wagner  
Phyllis Weiser

I am honored to be chairing this committee and look forward to our work together with genuine excitement.



Rabbi Arnold Goodman  
Chair, Search Committee



### Poet's Corner

#### In Praise

Hail the hand that scattered space with stars,  
Wrapped whirling world in bright blue blanket, air,  
Made worlds within worlds, elements in earth,  
Souls within skins, every one a teeming universe,  
Every tree a system of semantics, and pushed  
Beyond probability to place consciousness  
On this cooling crust of burning rock.  
  
Oh praise that hand, mind, heart, soul, power or force  
That so inclosed, separated, limited planets, trees, humans  
Yet breaks all bounds and borders  
To lavish on us light, love, life  
This trembling glory.

Ruth Brin

### New Atlanta Jewish Community High School

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Please address any questions or comments to: Kate Herring  
NAJCHS • 2221 Peachtree Street • Suite D-334  
Atlanta, GA 30309 • or Telephone (404) 373-9717

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### Board of Directors

*Back row, L-R:* Gloria Mintz, Rabbi Bill Rothschild, Brian Schleicher, Michael Rosenzweig, Carol Nemo, Steve Berman, Michael Plasker, Kate Herring (*ex officio*), Dr. Teo Forcht Dagi

*Front row, L-R:* Felicia Weber, Malcolm N. Minsk, Phyllis Weiser, Ann Davis, Gerald Cohen, Dr. David R. Blumenthal

*Members not pictured:* Rabbi Arnold Goodman, Larry Joseph, Andrew Kouss, Dr. Sam Schatten

## Philosophy Statement

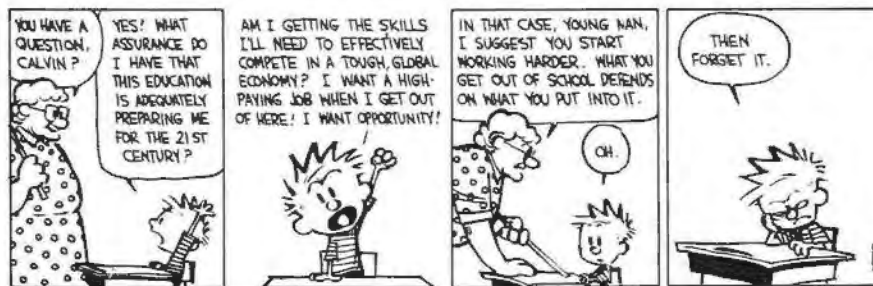
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The New Atlanta Jewish Community High School has adopted a non-discriminatory policy whereby it will admit students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin.