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Policy Brief: Background and Professional Training of Teachers in Jewish Schools, 1994.

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Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

Our Educators: The New Imperative

FORUM: Thursday, November 17

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM

C201, C205

Join:

Morton L. Mandel:
Chair

The Hon. Amnon Rubinstein:
Minister of Education, *The State of Israel*

Dr. Adam Gamoran:
University of Wisconsin

Alan Hoffmann:
Council of Initiatives in Jewish Education

The first dramatic findings of this just-released policy brief and a new partnership between Israel and North America to revitalize the profession of Jewish educators.

Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

עת לעשות
A Time to Act

CIJE

CIJE: A Catalyst for Change

Launched in 1990, the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) is an independent organization dedicated to the revitalization of Jewish education across North America through comprehensive, systemic reform. Through strategic planning and the management of change, CIJE initiates reform by working in partnership with individual communities, local federations, continental organizations, denominational movements, foundations, and educational institutions. CIJE focuses on critical educational issues which will ultimately impact on the future of Jewish life, for Jewish education is a cornerstone of meaningful Jewish continuity.

The CIJE Strategic Agenda

CIJE was established to implement the recommendations of the Mandel Commission on Jewish Education in North America, a distinguished coalition of community and foundation leaders, scholars, educators, and rabbis from all denominations. After deliberating for eighteen months about how to "enlarge the scope, raise the standards, and improve the quality of Jewish education," the Commission concluded in June 1990 that educational reform depends foremost on the achievement of two vital tasks: building the profession of Jewish education and mobilizing community support for Jewish education and continuity. These are the building blocks of the CIJE agenda.

Building the Profession

Although there are many talented educators involved in Jewish education, the system suffers from a shortage of quality teachers, principals, educational directors, camp directors, and other professionals committed to the field, in both formal and informal settings. CIJE's efforts to enhance the Jewish educational profession are multi-pronged. On the local level, CIJE strategizes with communities to develop plans and initiate action to recruit new educators and to offer better salaries and benefits, ongoing professional development programs, and career

track opportunities. Simultaneously, CIJE serves as an intermediary with universities, training institutions, and continental agencies to create innovative programs to build an infrastructure for attracting excellent people to the field.

Mobilizing Community Support

One essential element of community mobilization is significant new funding, another is leadership. CIJE promotes local efforts to attract a new generation of leaders committed to Jewish education and to recruit and build "wall-to-wall coalitions"—community leaders in tandem with educators, academic specialists, philanthropists, and rabbis, with all segments of the community represented—to support and sustain reform. CIJE also works to develop a cadre of leaders at the continental level who will be advocates for Jewish education.

To demonstrate these interrelated principles in concrete ways, CIJE has established lead communities — laboratories for change—where CIJE staff works closely with lay and professional leaders. In these cities, CIJE seeks to showcase the positive results that emerge when personnel and community issues in Jewish education are taken seriously. Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee were selected in Fall 1992 as the initial lead communities. CIJE's next step is to widen its efforts and form new partnerships, disseminating the lessons learned in the lead communities to communities across North America.

Reform Through Thoughtful Action

CIJE sees itself as an architect for reform—planning an innovative strategic design for Jewish education and working with others to implement it. If building the profession and mobilizing community support are the foundations of CIJE's plan, its support projects are the pillars:

■ Documenting Success—*The Best Practices Project*

Throughout North America there are examples of successful Jewish education—outstanding early childhood programs, supplementary schools, day schools, summer camps, adult education, and other venues of Jewish education that *do* work. CIJE researchers are identifying and documenting successful models; published guides based on their work analyze and explore how such models can be translated to other educational settings. Through the Best Practices Project, CIJE is furthering the understanding of the components of excellence.

■ Building "Vision-Driven" Institutions—*The Goals Project*

The Goals Project is a CIJE initiative toward the development and actualization of visions and goals for Jewish educational institutions.

Some educational institutions have underlying, but often unspoken, visions of what they seek to accomplish; many others need to generate a comprehensive vision of their mission. When visions and goals are clarified, communicated, and put into action, they can play a significant role in shaping the educational experience. Through the Goals Project, CIJE engages educational institutions and the local community in a process of learning, reflection, and analysis to define their institutional vision, understand its educational implications, and use that knowledge in setting priorities and planning. An important aim of the Project is to create a climate in communities that encourages and supports serious attention to this process.

Creating a Framework for Educational Research

Ongoing analysis and research informs and supports all of CIJE's efforts. A leader in bringing professional tools of monitoring and evaluation to Jewish education, CIJE is involved with research on two levels: building a comprehensive research agenda for Jewish education and using cutting-edge techniques to evaluate its ongoing projects in the field. In its work with the lead communities, CIJE moves responsively from research to analysis to action.

CIJE At Work: A New Vision of Jewish Education

CIJE's staff includes experienced educators, consultants, and internationally-renowned experts in the areas of Jewish and general education, community planning, Judaic Studies, educational philosophy, research, leadership, and organizational change. They bring the latest thinking in their fields to the endeavor of Jewish education.

Engaged in efforts with communities across North America and with a wide range of communal organizations, foundations, universities, and denominational movements, CIJE is bringing together a new alliance of talented people committed to its agenda of Jewish educational reform. CIJE is forging new connections, developing effective means to join forces toward a common goal. Through its innovative approach and strategic partnerships, CIJE seeks to demonstrate the significant breakthroughs that are possible when funding, planning, and leadership coalesce on behalf of Jewish education.

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CIJE Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education

Policy Brief:

Background and Professional Training of Teachers in Jewish Schools

A new two-year study of Jewish educators in three North American communities offers a striking assessment of teachers' preparation and professional development in day schools, supplementary schools, and pre-schools.

Background and Professional Training of Teachers in Jewish Schools

OVERVIEW

A new two-year study of Jewish educators in three North American communities offers a striking assessment of teachers' preparation and professional development in day schools, supplementary schools, and pre-schools.

Over 80% of the teachers surveyed lacked professional training either in education or in Judaica—or in both. Yet teachers receive little in-service training to overcome their lack of background, far less than is commonly expected of teachers in general education.

In day schools, 40% of Judaica teachers have neither a degree in Jewish studies nor certification as Jewish educators, yet these teachers attend fewer than 2 in-service workshops a year on average.

In supplementary schools, close to 80% of the teachers have neither a degree in Jewish studies nor certification as Jewish educators. In-service opportunities are infrequent and usually not connected to each other in a comprehensive plan for professional development.

Pre-school teachers are the least prepared in Jewish content when they enter their positions. Although early childhood educators have more staff development opportunities because of state-mandated licensing requirements, even these are not sufficient to compensate for their limited backgrounds. Moreover, 10% of these teachers are not Jewish; in one community the figure is as high as 21%.

And yet, in all settings, the study shows that teachers are strongly committed to Jewish education as a career. They are enthusiastic and devoted to working with children and to contributing to the Jewish people.

This finding presents a compelling argument for addressing a central problem identified by the study: the insufficient preparation of teachers. Research in the field of education indicates that carefully crafted in-service training can indeed improve the quality of teaching.

Given the commitment of the teaching force in Jewish schools, investment in well-designed professional development for teachers can make a decisive difference, yielding rich rewards for the entire North American Jewish community.

A comprehensive plan to improve the in-service training of Jewish educators will eventually have to be combined with an ambitious and systematic plan to improve the recruitment and training of educators before they enter the field.

This policy brief is the first of a series based on The CIJE Study of Educators. *The complete study will be available in 1995.*

The CIJE Study of Educators

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The Jewish community of North America is facing a crisis of major proportions. Large numbers of Jews have lost interest in Jewish values, ideals, and behavior. The responsibility for developing Jewish identity and instilling a commitment to Judaism...now rests primarily with education.

—A Time to Act

In November 1990, the Commission on Jewish Education in North America released *A Time to Act*, a report calling for dramatic change in the scope, standards, and quality of Jewish education on this continent. It concluded that the revitalization of Jewish education—whatever the setting or age group—will depend on two essential tasks: **building the profession of Jewish education;** and **mobilizing community support for Jewish education**. The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) was established to implement the Commission's conclusions.

Since 1992, CIJE has been working with three communities—Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee—to create models of systemic change at the local level. A central tenet of CIJE is that policy decisions in education must be informed by solid data. These communities boldly engaged in a pioneering, comprehensive study of their educational personnel in day schools, supplementary schools, and pre-schools. All the educational directors and classroom teachers were surveyed, and a sample of each was interviewed in depth. The goal: To create a communal plan of action to build the profession of Jewish education in each community and thereby develop a model for North American Jewish communities that wish to embark on this process.

Two years later, the initial results of this study are illuminating not only for the three communities but as a catalyst for reexamining the personnel of Jewish education throughout North America. Despite the differences among these communities, the findings in each are similar enough that we believe the profile of Jewish educators offered by the study is likely to resemble those of many other communities.

This policy brief summarizes the study's findings in a critical area: the background and professional training of teachers in Jewish schools (**Box 1**).

About the Jewish Educators of Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee

Teachers in the Jewish schools of these communities are predominantly female (84%) and American-born (86%). Only 7% were born in Israel, and less than 1% each are from Russia, Germany, England, and Canada. The large majority, 80%, are married. The teachers identify with a variety of Jewish religious denominations. Thirty-two percent are Orthodox, and 8% call themselves traditional. Twenty-five percent identify with the Conservative movement; 31% see themselves as Reform; and the remaining 4% list Reconstructionist and other preferences. Thirty-two percent work full-time in Jewish education (i.e., they reported working 25 hours per week or more), and about 20% work in more than one school.

Box 1

Are teachers in Jewish schools trained as Jewish educators?

Most are not (**Fig. 1**). The survey indicates that only 19% have professional training in both education and Jewish studies. (In *The CIJE Study of Educators*, training in education is defined as a university or teacher's institute degree in education; training in Jewish studies is defined as a college or seminary degree in Jewish studies, or, alternatively, certification in Jewish education.) Thirty-five percent have a degree in education but not in Jewish studies. Twelve percent have a degree in Jewish studies but not in education. And 34% lack professional training in both education and Jewish studies.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

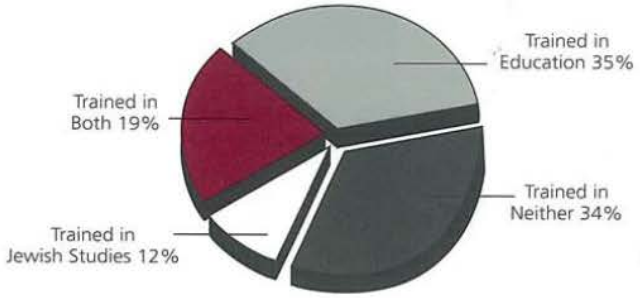

Fig. 1

Does the teachers' training differ according to educational setting?

Generally, yes.

Training in education: Over 40% of teachers in each setting (pre–school, day school, and supplementary school) reported university degrees in education (**Table 1**). An additional 15% to 17% of pre–school and day school teachers have education degrees from teacher's institutes, as do 5% of supplementary school teachers. (These institutes are usually one– or two–year programs in lieu of university study.)

TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Degree in Education

Setting	*From University*	*From Teacher's Institute*
Day School	43%	17%
Supplementary	41%	5%
Pre-school	46%	15%
All Schools	43%	11%

Table 1

TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS IN JEWISH STUDIES

Setting	*Certified in Jewish Education*	*Major in Jewish Studies*
Day School	40%	37%
Supplementary	18%	12%
Pre-school	10%	4%
All Schools	22%	17%

Table 2

Training in Jewish studies: Day school teachers of Judaica are more likely than teachers in other settings to have post–secondary training in Jewish studies. Still, only 40% of day school Judaica teachers are certified as Jewish educators; 37% have a degree in Jewish studies from a college, graduate school, or rabbinic seminary (**Table 2**). In supplementary and pre–schools, the proportions are much smaller. Overall, only 31% of the teachers have a degree in Jewish studies or certification in Jewish education, and even in day schools only 60% have such training.

What Jewish education did the teachers receive as children?

Almost all the teachers received some Jewish education as children, but for many the education was minimal. Before age 13, 25% of supplementary school teachers and 40% of pre–school teachers attended religious school only once a week; 11% of supplementary school teachers and 22% of pre–school teachers did not attend at all. After age 13, even greater proportions received minimal or no Jewish education (**Figs. 2, 3; Box 2**).

TEACHERS' JEWISH EDUCATION BEFORE 13

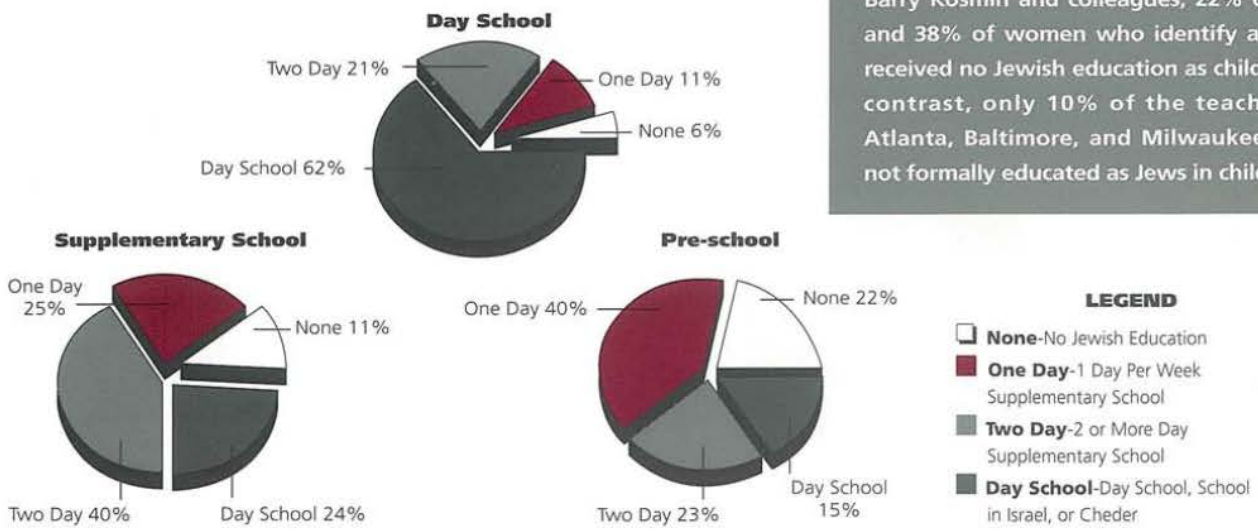

Fig. 2

According to "Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey," by Dr. Barry Kosmin and colleagues, 22% of men and 38% of women who identify as Jews received no Jewish education as children. In contrast, only 10% of the teachers in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee were not formally educated as Jews in childhood.

Box 2

TEACHERS' JEWISH EDUCATION AFTER 13

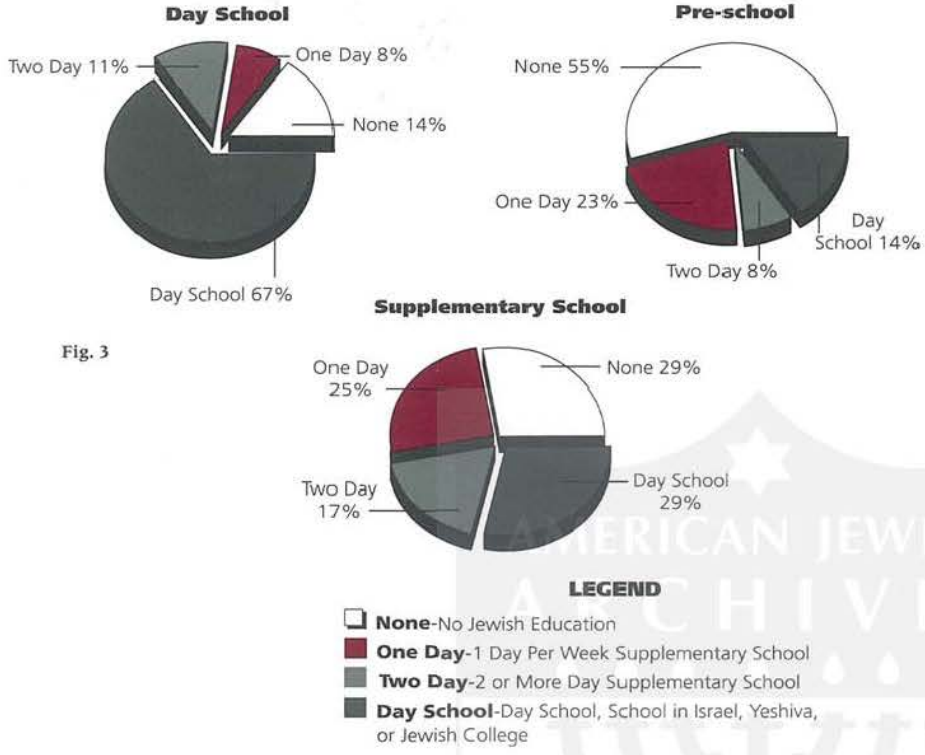

Fig. 3

One of the more startling findings is that many pre–school teachers are teaching Jewish subject matter to Jewish children—but are not themselves Jews. Overall, 10% of the teachers in Jewish pre–schools are not Jewish. In one community, the figure is as high as 21%.

Why is this the case? One pre–school director we interviewed shed light on the question:

> I have an opening for next year. I have a teacher leaving who is not Jewish. I'm interviewing three teachers, two of whom are Jewish, one of whom is not. And to be frank with you...I should hire one [who is]...Jewish. Unfortunately, of the three people I am interviewing, the non–Jewish teacher is the best teacher in terms of what she can do in the classroom. So it creates a real problem.

In this instance, the Jewish candidates were better versed in Jewish content and were Jewish role models, but the non–Jewish applicant was more skilled as an educator, and that consideration carried more weight. Many pre–school directors described an acute shortage of qualified Jewish teachers.

Do present levels of in–service training compensate for background deficiencies?

No. Most teachers attend very few in–service programs each year. Eighty percent of all teachers were required to attend at least one workshop during a two–year period. Of these teachers, around half attended no more than 4 workshops over a two–year time span. (A workshop can range from a one–hour session to a one–day program.)

Pre–school teachers: These teachers typically attended 6 or 7 workshops in a two–year period, which is more than teachers in other Jewish settings (**Fig. 4**). Most pre–schools are licensed by the state, and teachers are required to participate in state–mandated professional development. Given the minimal background of many of these teachers in Judaica, however, present levels of in–service training are not sufficient.

Day school teachers: Although state requirements apply to general studies teachers in day schools, Judaica teachers are not bound by state standards. We found little evidence of sustained professional development among the day school teachers we surveyed. On average, those who were required to attend workshops did so about 3.8 times every 2 years—or less than 2 workshops a year.

IN-SERVICE WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

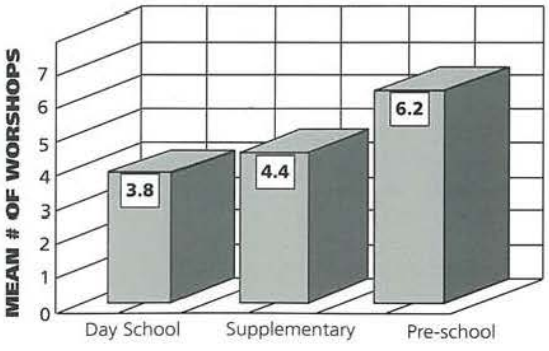

Fig. 4 **Note:** Average # of workshops in the last two years includes only those teachers who responded that they were required to attend workshops and excludes first-year educators.

How does this compare to standards in public education? In Wisconsin, for example, teachers are required to attend 180 hours of workshops over a five–year period to maintain their teaching license. Day school teachers in our study engaged in about 29 hours of workshops over a five–year period (assuming a typical workshop lasts 3 hours). This is less than one–sixth of the requirement for state–licensed teachers in Wisconsin. (Despite variations among states in our study, we found little difference across communities in the extent of professional development among day school teachers.)

Supplementary school teachers: These teachers reported an average of 4.4 workshops in a two–year period. (There was some variation across communities in this finding.) But since most supplementary school teachers had little or no formal Jewish training after bar/bat mitzvah, and only about 50% were trained as educators, the current status of professional development for these teachers is of pressing concern. Even those who teach only a few hours each week can be nurtured to develop as educators through a sustained, sequential program of learning.

Summary: Atlanta, Baltimore, and Milwaukee offer a number of valuable in–service opportunities for their teachers. All three communities have city–wide, one–day teacher conferences, and all three have some form of incentive for professional development. Still, in–service training tends to be infrequent and sporadic, particularly for day and supplementary school teachers. Even workshops that teachers find helpful are isolated events, lacking the continuity of an overall system and plan for professional development. Experienced teachers may be offered the same workshops as novice teachers; teachers with strong backgrounds in Judaica but little training in education are sometimes offered the same opportunities as teachers with strong backgrounds in education but little Judaica training.

Are teachers in Jewish schools committed to the profession of Jewish education?

Yes. Sixty–nine percent of full–time teachers view Jewish education as their career (**Fig. 5**). Even among part–time teachers (those working fewer than 25 hours a week), over half described Jewish education as their career. In supplementary schools, where almost no teachers are full–time educators, 44% consider Jewish education their career. In total, 59% of the teachers view Jewish education as their career.

JEWISH EDUCATION AS A CAREER?

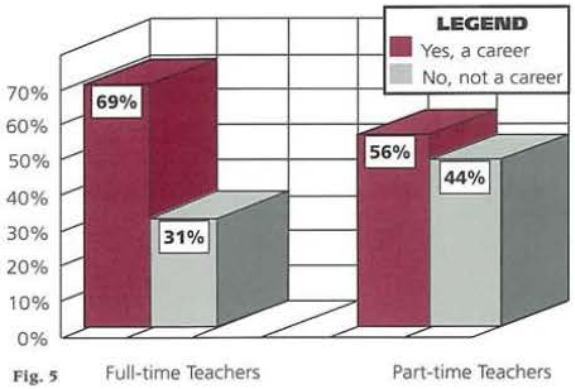

Fig. 5

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Years of Experience	*Percentage of Teachers*
One year or less	6%
Two to five years	27%
Six to ten years	29%
Eleven to twenty years	24%
More than twenty years	14%

Table 3

There is also considerable stability in the teaching force. Thirty–eight percent of the teachers have taught for more than 10 years, while only 6% were in their first year as Jewish educators when they responded to the survey (**Table 3**). Sixty–four percent intend to continue teaching in the same positions, and only 6% plan to seek positions outside Jewish education in the near future.

Given the commitment of the teaching force in Jewish schools, investment in well–designed professional development for teachers can yield rich results.

A PLAN for ACTION

In Communities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the Continental Level

As an ever–increasing number of communities are engaged in the creation and implementation of their individual plans, how can the major continental institutions and organizations address professional development from their own vantage points?

This effort should be spearheaded by those seminaries, colleges, and universities that offer degrees in Jewish education; by the denominational movements; and by those continental organizations whose primary mission is Jewish education. In collaboration with communal efforts, such educational institutions and organizations should design their own plans to conceptualize both in–service and pre–service training elements for the field.

They should also create professional development opportunities for educational leaders; expand training opportunities for educators in North America and Israel; and empower educators to have an influence on the curriculum, teaching methods, and educational philosophy of the institutions in which they work.

Continental institutions also contribute to building the profession of Jewish education by: energetically recruiting candidates for careers in Jewish education; developing new sources of personnel; advocating improved salaries and benefits for Jewish educators; and constructing career tracks in Jewish education.

The Jewish people has survived and flourished because of a remarkable commitment to the centrality of teaching and learning. The North American Jewish community has continued this commitment, with the result that Jews are among the most highly educated citizens on the continent. We need to bring the same expectations to Jewish education as we do to general education, for the sake of our unique inheritance.

About The CIJE Study of Educators

The CIJE Study of Educators is part of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback (MEF) initiative in the three Lead Communities. The study involved both a survey of the formal Jewish educators in each community, and a series of in–depth interviews with a more limited sample of educators. The questionnaire was developed after reviewing earlier instruments that surveyed Jewish education, with many questions adapted from *The Los Angeles BJE Teacher Census* (1990).

The survey was administered in spring 1993 or fall 1993 to all Judaica teachers at all Jewish day schools, supplementary schools, and pre–school programs in the three communities. General studies teachers in day schools were not included. Non–Jewish pre–school teachers who teach Judaica were included. Lead Community project directors in each community coordinated the survey administration. Teachers completed the questionnaires and returned them at their schools. (Some teachers who did not receive a survey form at school were mailed a form and a self–addressed envelope, and returned their forms by mail.) Over 80% of the teachers in each community filled out and returned the questionnaire, for a total of almost 1000 respondents. (A parallel survey form was administered to educational directors; those data will be analyzed in a future report.)

The interview questions were designed by the MEF Research Team. Interviews were conducted with teachers in pre–schools, supplementary schools, and day schools, as well as with educational directors and educators at central agencies and institutions of Jewish higher learning. In total, 125 educators were interviewed, generally for one to two hours. CIJE field researchers conducted and analyzed the interviews.

The questionnaire and the interview protocols will be available for public distribution in 1995.

This policy brief was prepared by CIJE's MEF Research Team: Adam Gamoran; Ellen Goldring; Roberta Louis Goodman; Bill Robinson; and Julie Tammivaara. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Nancy Hendrix, Demographic Data Consultants. They appreciate the efforts of Lauren Azoulai and Janice Alper (Atlanta); Chaim Botwinick (Baltimore); and Ruth Cohen (Milwaukee). They are grateful for the guidance of the MEF Academic Advisory Committee: James Coleman; Seymour Fox; Annette Hochstein; Stephen Hoffman; and Mike Inbar. They also acknowledge the help of the CIJE staff. The authors are especially thankful to the Jewish educators who participated in the study.

Technical Notes

In total, 983 teachers responded out of a total population of 1192 in the three communities. In general, we avoided sampling inferences (e.g., t–tests) because we are analyzing population figures, not samples. Respondents include 302 day school teachers, 392 supplementary school teachers, and 289 pre–school teachers. Teachers who work at more than one type of setting were categorized according to the setting (day school, supplementary school, or pre–school) at which they teach the most hours (or at the setting they listed first if hours were the same for two types of settings). Each teacher is counted only once. If teachers were counted in all the settings in which they teach, the results would look about the same, except that supplementary school teachers would look more like day school teachers, because 61 day school teachers also work in supplementary schools.

Missing responses were excluded from calculations of percentages. Generally, less than 5% of responses were missing for any one item. An exception was the question about certification in Jewish education. In two communities, many teachers left this blank, apparently because they were not sure what certification meant. On the assumption that teachers who did not know what certification meant were not themselves certified, for this item only we calculated percentages based on the total who returned the survey forms, instead of the total who responded to the question.

„והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך"

"And you shall teach them to your children and to your children's children."

—Deut. 4:9

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