



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980 – 2008.
Series E: Mandel Foundation Israel, 1984 – 1999.

Box
D-1

Folder
1972

CIJE TEI MEF evaluation. Best Practices reports,
1992-1995.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

DRAFT

CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute

MEF Evaluation

Document #1: Working Hypotheses and Revised Time Line

November 1995

The *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute* is a three-year project designed to create a cadre of outstanding teachers for supplementary and pre-school education. In the first year, a group of 10 to 20 educational leaders will meet together during several seminars to study how to improve professional development in Jewish education. During this year and through the following two years, the participants will be asked to develop and implement in-service educational programs for supplementary and/or pre-school teachers in their communities. Several of these participants will serve as program faculty for the second year. In the second year, the first cohort will meet twice more and a new group of educational leaders and outstanding teachers will begin studying together. These second-year participants also will be asked to develop and implement in-service educational programs within their communities. Finally, the process will be repeated in the third year, using several participants from the second year as faculty, and bringing together a new group of educational leaders and outstanding teachers.

In the first year of the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute*, participants will consist of teams from eight Jewish communities in North America: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Hartford, Milwaukee, and San Francisco. The intent of the CIJE was to have each community

team include three educational leaders: the director of the local central agency (i.e., Bureau of Jewish Education) and educational directors from two schools (either supplementary or pre-schools). The central agency directors were asked to attend for two reasons. First, the CIJE anticipated that through their participation the *Institute* will impact upon community-level professional growth activities. Second, by including them in the project, the CIJE hoped that the central agency directors will provide essential support to school-based efforts in professional development by assisting educational directors in the development, implementation, and evaluation of in-service offerings within their schools. In lieu of either the central agency director or an educational director, the CIJE encouraged the attendance of the central agency staff responsible for community professional development. The CIJE hopes that a relationship of critical collegueship will develop within each community team, in which they meet frequently to support and discuss their efforts to develop and implement in-service educational programs in their respective domains (i.e., school or community).

Participants, ⁱⁿ which will actually attend the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute*, are as follows:

Atlanta (3):	the central agency director, a supplementary school educational director, and a pre-school director.
Baltimore (3):	the central agency director, a central agency staff member, and a supplementary school educational director.
Boston (1):	a central agency staff member.
Chicago (3):	the central agency director and two central agency staff members.
Cleveland (3):	the central agency director and two central agency staff members.
Hartford (1):	the central agency director.
Milwaukee (2):	the central agency director and a pre-school director.
San Francisco (2):	the central agency director and a central agency staff member.

During the course of the *Institute* seminars, the participants will explore areas of critical concern for the improvement of professional development in Jewish education. These areas will include:

- What is "good teaching"?
- How does "good teaching" balance respect for students and subject matter?
- How is "good teaching" supported by a clear sense of goals?
- How do teachers learn to engage in "good teaching"?
- What do teachers need to learn in order to engage in "good teaching"?
- How can professional development programs enhance teachers' ability to engage in "good teaching"?
- How can we (the participants) improve the professional development offerings in our communities and schools, so that they more effectively encourage "good teaching"?

During the *Institute*, the participants will experience several different types of professional development including curricular investigation, videotaping, field-based projects, and journal writing. The activities of the *Institute* will provide a model of effective professional development and a framework for participants to reflect upon their roles as teacher-educators.

Through participation in the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute*, it is envisioned that the participants will be able to design and implement improved in-service educational programs within their schools and communities. This constitutes the general hypothesis guiding the MEF evaluation of the *Institute*. The following statements, divided into eight topics, comprise what the CIJE faculty considers to be the qualities of improved in-service programs. These statements read as "Participation in the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute* will lead to a communal environment in which ...", constitute the set of hypothesis to be tested by the MEF team.

A. Focus

1. Programs are targeted to specific populations.

2. Programs have goals designed to meet the particular needs of the specific populations.
3. Programs are part of an overall community plan for professional development.

B. Honoring the Triangle

4. Programs honor equally the participants (personal meaning), their students (pedagogy), and the subject matter (Jewish content).

Not every program needs to contain each element. If program participants are expected or required to attend a series of programs, each program may focus on a different area. In addition, program participants already may have skills or knowledge in one area. Thus, a program for Orthodox teachers may focus on pedagogy, while a program for early childhood educators may focus on personal meaning and Jewish content.

C. Powerful and Empowered Learning

5. Programs offer opportunities for intensive, investigative learning through case studies and field-based projects.
6. Programs empower the participants through including them in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program.
7. Programs run for a substantial duration and include a large number of meetings, each meeting running for a considerable length of time.
8. Program meetings build on what was learned in previous meetings or in previous courses.

D. Bridges to the Classroom

9. Participants are encouraged (especially by their principals) and afforded the opportunity to translate what they have learned into new or revised classroom practices.
10. Participants have opportunities to discuss their efforts at translation with other educational professionals outside and inside the school.
11. Principals and teachers participate in the programs as teams.

E. Institutional Relations

12. School-based educational leaders and central agency personnel jointly design and implement in-service programs.
13. Incentives are provided to encourage participation in the programs (e.g., release time, salary increases, certification).

14. Both the central agency and the schools contribute to the provision of incentives for programs run either by the central agency or the schools.

F. Lay and Rabbinic Support

15. Lay leaders and rabbis are involved in the design and implementation of the program.

16. Teacher contracts incorporate in-service requirements and resources (incentives) to enable teacher participation.

17. Programs exist that are specifically designed for lay leaders and rabbis.

G. Evaluation

18. Program evaluation focuses on classroom outcomes.

H. Implementation

19. Participants in the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute* who attended as a community team that includes both a central agency staff member and an educational director will be more successful at implementing programs with the qualities delineated in the preceding statements than the other participants.

EVALUATION DESIGN

During their first year in the *CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute*, participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each in-service program that their institution (i.e., central agency, supplementary school, pre-school) sponsors. They will be asked to complete questionnaires again during their second and third years of participation. Following each round of questionnaires, the *Institute* participants and other key community members from a subsample of communities (i.e. Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Hartford, and Milwaukee) will be interviewed by the MEF Research Team. The data will provide five case studies from which comparisons can be made over time and across communities.

The questionnaire, entitled *CIJE TEI Professional Development Program Survey*, will obtain information to evaluate whether and to what degree changes have been made in regard to the above hypotheses. In addition, the questionnaire will provide baseline data on the number of in-service educational programs being offered in a community, the number of participants in these programs, and the types of participants attending the programs. Furthermore, every supplementary and pre-school director in the communities who have sent a team to the *Institute* will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each in-service program that their institution offers. This will provide a comprehensive map of community professional growth opportunities.

The interviews will obtain information on the participants' efforts to improve the quality of professional development in their community and schools. The following areas will be explored:

- What actions are they taking to improve the quality professional development?
- With whom are they working?
- How has their role in the community and/or school(s) changed?
- What successes have they experienced?
- What problems have they encountered?

In addition, the interviews will clarify the information obtained from the questionnaire and extend our understanding of the professional development opportunities being offered in each community.

TIME LINE

Activity	Date of Completion
1. Design of the <i>CIJE TEI Professional Development Program Survey</i>	December, 1995
2. Initial completion of the <i>CIJE TEI Professional Development Program Survey</i> .	January, 1995
3. Document #2a (baseline data) written. See MEF Plan for Evaluation of the <i>CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute</i> .	February, 1995
4. Design of interview protocol.	March, 1995
5. Interviews conducted with <i>Institute</i> participants and other key community members.	April, 1995
6. Document #2b written.	May, 1995
7. Second completion of the <i>CIJE TEI Professional Development Program Survey</i> .	?
8. Second round of Interviews conducted with <i>Institute</i> participants and other key community members.	?
9. Document #3 (evaluation of changes) written. See MEF Plan for Evaluation of the <i>CIJE Teacher-Educator Institute</i> .	?



HOLTZ MATERIAL



Cover Sheet

Best Practice in the Supplementary School

(For Individual Schools)

REPORT BY: DR. SAMUEL K. JOSEPH

Date 5-4-92

Name of the School T.M. WISE TEMPLE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Address 8329 Ridge Rd.

Cincinnati, Oh 45236

Contact Person at School: Melanie Cole Goldberg, R.J.E.

and his or her

Position: Director of Education

Approximate Number of Students 365 (K - 8); 9th-12th part of
From ages 4 yrs to 14/15 yrs Community Reform H.S.

Number of Teachers: 31 plus 23 Madrikhim

Approximate budget (if available) \$175,000

What particular emphases of this school are worth noting

(e.g. Hebrew focus; teacher education emphasis; rabbi-school relationship, etc.):

Many areas as seen in the report...but note how the school participates in the life of the congregation

Report
Best Practice in the Supplementary School

Isaac M. Wise Temple Religious School
Cincinnati, Ohio

There is learning going on in the Wise Temple Religious School. There is excitement in the classrooms and the hallways. The school is a vital presence in the congregation and the community. This school can be counted as one of the "best practice" schools.

The goals of the Wise Temple Religious School are taken directly from the national goals articulated by the Union of American Hebrew Congregation's Joint Commission on Jewish Education. Several years ago the Education Committee of the Temple adopted these goals as part of a curriculum review. The goals were then ratified by the Board of Trustees of the congregation. Though only part of the curriculum of the school comes from the UAHC, the entire program is founded on these goals.

Each year the school publishes a Parent Handbook that is distributed to each family. Prominent in the Handbook are the goals of the school. It should be added that the Parent Handbook also includes statements by the Rabbis and Educator about the importance of the goals and how these goals are not just for the children in the school, but form a life long learning agenda for all congregants.

The school seeks to create Jews who actively and knowledgeably participate in the life of the synagogue and the Jewish community. Since this is not achieved in one's youth, but as an adult, it is difficult to measure. It may even be too early to measure if we are to look solely at the children. But some things clearly can be seen.

In many areas of involvement there is a marked increase in participation by students from the school if one looks at the data over a period of several years. During the past few years the numbers of students attending UAHC summer camping programs greatly increased. The number of students participating in Israel experiences, UAHC and other programs, rises each year. The B'nai Mitzvah Program, a very extensive community action curriculum, gets stronger and stronger. The Temple Youth Group is very large and active and because of demand a Junior Youth Group, called the Wise Guys, is vigorous. Most impressive is that there are virtually NO drop outs after Bar/Bat Mitzvah until at least through 10th grade. This year's 12th grade class will graduate with two-thirds of the original religious school class. (The school keeps very accurate records concerning who registers and who does not each year.)

In a goal area where it may be more difficult to "see" the increase in involvement, the school attempts to model that behavior during school time. T'filah are an example. The school now has T'filah every week in school so the students can practice Jewish life behaviors.

One of the strongest aspect of this school is how it participates in the life of the congregation. Wise Temple as a congregation has a core value of responding to the social issues facing Cincinnati and beyond. The school is a full partner in any response. For example, the congregation is part of a coalition called the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Every few months, homeless people are sheltered and fed at the Temple for several days. The students in the school are cooks and bakers for these people. The students decorate with welcome posters the classrooms where the cots are placed. The children made curtains for the rooms. They make cards of welcome to put on each cot. They even made shlach manot during Purim for these people needing shelter.

The students collect all kinds of supplies, from tooth brushes and paste to mops and brooms, as part of the Temple's work with another project called Hope for the Homeless. Every grade in the school is involved in yet a third project called the Wise Up Program. This program matches congregants with over 33 social service needs projects in the community. Last year over 600 congregants participated along with children from the school.

It is easy to see how the vision of the school, and the congregation, is communicated everywhere one looks. There is a weekly Faculty Bulletin containing articles from the world of Jewish education, secular education, Judaica and Hebraica. Teacher growth is a major goal here. The Temple Bulletin has monthly articles about the school. The parents have their own newsletter called Wise Parents. Even the hallways are covered....with letters thanking the students for tzedakah projects they performed.

There is a wonderful feeling in the school. Yes, there are discipline problems at times. Usually in the upper grades. But the "trouble makers" tend to cause problems in only small ways. Talking too much when it is quiet time, for example. Not listening to the teacher is another. Yet the school has a policy of REWARDING positive behavior. Each semester teachers select students in their class who exhibit "correct" behavior. There is a specific list of criteria for the teachers to follow. Students receiving this reward are called a Class Act. They have their names published and they receive ice cream certificates, or movie passes, and a certificate of recognition.

Overall, the discipline philosophy and policies of the school are admirable. Parents are sent a full description of the behavior philosophy, discipline policies, and the Class Act Program at the beginning of the year. Post cards are sent home after each class session if needed. These cards range from the "We missed you hope you are okay" to "You should know that your son/daughter was wonderful in class today". The school also keeps exact records regarding referrals of students to the office and contacts with parents when required.

After analyzing the systemic issues in the school one is a bit overwhelmed by Wise Temple Religious School's efforts to be a "good" school. They are committed also to improvement and growth. And they are aware that a status quo really does not exist.

The teaching staff at Wise Temple Religious School most certainly is the heart of the program. There are thirty-one paid teachers and 23 madrikhim. It should be noted here that the school includes grades preK through 8 with grades 9 to 12 as part of the community sponsored Cincinnati Reform Jewish High School. The Educators and the Rabbis are centrally involved in the high school program.

Approximately 40% of the teachers at Wise are congregants, 30% rabbinic students from Hebrew Union College, 10% are students at the University of Cincinnati, and 20% are from the general Jewish community. More than half of the staff are veterans of the school, working there for more than five years. In fact, the only real turnover is caused by the graduation and ordination of the teachers who are also full time students.

The rabbinic students bring a great knowledge of Judaica/Hebraica to the school. The other members of the staff are less able in this area. At the same time the teachers clearly express a desire to know more so they do participate willingly in learning opportunities offered by the school, Temple, and the BJE/Community. Faculty meetings are regularly dedicated to enhancing the Jewish knowledge of the staff and their teaching skills.

The teaching styles of the veteran teachers are very rooted in informal educational methods. All the classes have a strong discussion component, there is a little or no lecturing. Projects are key in every grade. Two grades should be singled out here. First, the Open Room for prekindergarten and Kindergarten. This Open Room has been going for 16 years! There are 5 teachers, 3 madrikhim, and a music specialist. There are about 62 children in the Room. The staff is expert at managing and teaching such a program. The other area is Cooperative Learning. The 6th grade teacher is an expert in this methodology and uses it successfully with her class. She is now training other members of the staff to use it also.

During the summer months the Educator meets several times with any new teachers coming into the school. She uses those times to help them prepare for the school year, whether they require curriculum support, administrative assistance, or the like. It is also a chance to begin to ease the newcomer into the culture of the school.

The Temple itself has a fine resource that must be noted for its importance to the school ... its library. The library has over 16,000 volumes! It must be one of the largest synagogue libraries in the country. There is a very knowledgeable librarian who is on site almost full time and assists teachers, and students, with their research needs.

As stated earlier, the curriculum of the school begins with the national curriculum of the UAHC. This is followed through grade 4 and then the curriculum is a straight subject matter curriculum. The course work is enriched with special areas such as music and art. Parents and teachers receive a fully written out copy of the curriculum so they can see the course of study as a whole.

Every grade level has one major project each year that relates to their area of study. This project usually culminates with a large program, frequently including parents. For example, the 8th grade tzedakah unit culminated in a project called "Life Savers". The students developed a set of criteria for judging a person as performing "life saving" acts. Using the Temple bulletin and mailings to homes, they called on congregants to nominate members of the congregation who perform(ed) such acts and the class voted to whom the awards should go. Another grade studied Shabbat and culminated with a Family Day on Shabbat.

Each class participates in family shabbat dinners at the Temple followed by services. Several classes have a Grandparents Day on a particular Sunday. The class studying life-cycle has a big Wedding, parents attend and participate. Tu b'Shvat was also a parent involvement day.

More work needs to be done in this area, but there is a strong desire in that direction. Next year will see even more of these types of events.

Materials used in the school, both print and non-print, come from about every source possible. All the major denominational and non-denominational publishers are represented. The Educator is committed to providing the teachers and the students with the best resource for a particular class regardless of who publishes it.

Evaluating whether the students are learning anything is somewhat difficult in this school. The hebrew program is an exception probably because it is skill related. Each hebrew class has testing all through the year and a final assessment before they move to the next level. The other classes are not tested in a traditional manner. Yet looking at the projects of each of the grade levels, looking at the programs in which they participate, and taking into account the overall level of participation in Temple life, it does seem that learning is going on.

The school does send home report cards twice per year. Called Progress Reports, the teachers relate the student's achievements in class directly to the objectives of that particular class in three areas...academic, hebrew, and citizenship. Most importantly, the teachers have to write a narrative comment about the student so the parents have a context for the "grades". Each Progress Report is signed by the teacher, reviewed by the Educator, and signed by the Educator.

Supervision is a final facet of the school to examine.

In-service training for the staff is a core value of the school. The teachers are paid to go to an all city in-service day run by the BJE. The school itself uses outside paid consultants several times a year to work with the staff. In fact this past year the teachers attended three workshops at the Temple, one on cooperative learning, one on children and death, and another on legal issues and teaching.

The Educator uses a monitoring approach to classroom supervision. She is frustrated that she does not have the staff to use a clinical style. It is a priority to add supervisory staff to the school.

One thing that does prove useful is that teachers are required to turn in lesson plans at least a week in advance of the lesson. The Educator reads each plan, writes comments, suggestions, and hints, then returns them to the teachers.

Overall the Educator is a fine model, an educational leader, for the teachers. She is especially effective in the area of planning and accomplishing goals. Teachers do look to her as their leader.

The Educator is perceived by the Temple community as the professional educator. She is always consulted, no staff member or congregant would plan an educational event without her input.

Even more, she is viewed as a Jewish professional leader. This is apparent when she is asked by the Rabbi to deliver a sermon from the pulpit.

The Educator is involved in the city wide Principal's Council and she helped in the formation of the Tri-state Area Reform Temple Educators group. She is very professional, very competent, very confident.

At one time the religious education program at Wise Temple was extremely weak. People connected with the school had a low self image, as did the entire school "system". Since that time the school is on a meteoric rise with no limits in sight. There are areas to work on, to improve. But people are saying "how do we get there", "when do we get there", not "we're satisfied; it's not important".



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

June 4, 1992

3101 CLIFTON AVENUE • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220-2488
(513) 221-1875

Dr. Barry Holtz
Melton Research Center
Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York, New York 10027

Dear Barry,

Following our conversation about the Religious School/Hebrew School at Wise Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio, I want to add some thoughts regarding the large percentage of students who remain in the program after bar-bat mitzvah.

Essentially there are a constellation of reasons for this phenomenon. I spoke with the Educator, Rabbis, parents, teachers, b'nai mitzvah tutors, and students. All confirmed that the reason for the high retention rate is complex and multi-faceted. I will attempt to explain what I learned.

Clearly there is a tradition in this congregation for post b'nai mitzvah schooling. It may be a historical reason, since the early Reform congregations frowned on bar mitzvah and tried to replace it with Confirmation in 9th grade. This congregation, founded by the "father" of Reform in the U.S., to this day has large Confirmation classes in 10th grade. My thought is there is a strong expectation by the Temple and parents that students remain through Confirmation.

Add to the expectation of "at least 10th grade" the fact of the Cincinnati Reform Jewish High School. This program, ten years old, is run jointly by five congregations. It meets for three hours per week on Sunday evenings. All 9th-12th graders of those congregations are eligible to attend, and over 200 do! The High School is the meeting place for a large segment of Jewish teens in this city. A report on the High School needs to be written some day, but suffice it to say for now that its presence is a strong motivator for students to remain post bar-bat mitzvah.

Wise Temple has a strong youth program. The Junior Youth Group and the Senior Youth Group are also a factor in the retention discussion. These groups have a core value of Jewish knowledge, involvement, practice, and action. There too is the expectation of further Jewish education.

June 4, 1992
Page 2

I also found that the Reform Movement's camping program was a factor. More and more of the students are attending the summer camp. Again, the value of a continuing Jewish education is held high.

Finally, when a bar-bat mitzvah and his/her family meet with the Senior Rabbi, approximately a year before the "event", they must sign a pledge promising that they will commit to continuing in the religious education of the Temple. The Rabbi believes that this factor is a very powerful one in keeping students in school post b'nai mitzvah.

I must report that the b'nai mitzvah program itself is probably a factor. The students spend a year working with a private tutor on their Torah and Haftarah reading. At the same time they meet twice a week in class studying what it means to be an active member of the Jewish community. The students like the program.

Barry, please add this letter to my report on Wise Temple Religious School for the "best practices" inventory.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph, PhD
Professor of Jewish Education



JUL 01 10:47 AM TEL 013 013
P. 4/18
Dear Barry,

At last. Enclosed you will find two "best practice" reports, two collections of materials from the schools visited, and receipts for travel expenses.

Both the experiences of visiting B'nai Keshet and Chisuk Amno and the process of writing up the reports have been enjoyable. I do want to share with you a couple of reflections. First, the act of visiting/observing has an "interventional" aspect to it. Stuart Seltzer talked to me about how my observations of and interviews with teachers affected them positively; he characterized the encounters as "a shot in the arm." In some situations of "shmusing" I suspect that I also may have given some helpful advice or conveyed a useful idea or two.

Secondly, while B'nai Keshet and Chisuk Amno are polar opposites in terms of money, size, and all that money and size imply, what they have in common intrigues me. The quality of their programs and the tenor of the institutions is importantly affected by organizational/structural decisions. You or I might normally be quicker to look for content and meaning; in fact, decisions about the structure of each organization, about who is in charge of what and how many hours of participation are required have had significant impact on the quality of programming. (Maybe the organizational development people will inherit the earth after all.)

It really has been fun. Let's talk soon. Please give Sophia, Elan, and Bethamie my love.

As ever,

Kathy
Kathy

Cover Sheet

Best Practice in the Supplementary School

(For Individual Schools)

REPORT BY: Kathy Green

Date June 1992

Name of the School Chesuk Amos Congregation

Address 8100 Stevenson Road.

Baltimore, Md., 21208

Contact Person at School: Raffi Stuart Seltzer
and his or her

Position: Religious School Principal

Approximate Number of Students See report

From ages _____ to _____

Number of Teachers: _____

Approximate budget (if available) _____

What particular emphases of this school are worth noting

(e.g. Hebrew focus; teacher education emphasis; rabbi-school relationship, etc.):

Chisuk Amuno Congregation does many things very well. It is both numerically and physically a large institution, a Conservative synagogue of between 1,200 to 1,300 member families, housed in a sprawling building at an expressway exit in suburban Baltimore. My primary contact person and informant at Chisuk Amuno was Rabbi Stuart Seltzer, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and for the last four years the director of the synagogue's religious school.

Rabbi Seltzer characterized Chisuk Amuno as an umbrella which reaches over four separate, albeit not autonomous schools, each with its own programs and staffs.

-Schools Within A School-

First, let us briefly look at the four schools, their programs, and staffs. Dr. Paul Schneider serves as educational director, placing him in a supervisory position above Rabbi Seltzer; Dr. Schneider is also principal of Chisuk Amuno's Solomon Schechter Day School. The day school for children from K through 8 began 10 years ago with 17 children and currently has an enrollment of 342, of whom 40-45% are children of Chisuk Amuno members. Rabbi Joel Zaiman, the senior rabbi of the synagogue, explained that he worked for the establishment of the school as a strategy to infuse what he perceived as an aging and faltering congregation with young people and new activity.

While Dr. Schneider believes that 20-25% of the SSDS students come from other congregations and perhaps 30-35% are not affiliated, the school is subsidized by Chisuk Amuno. Tuition is under \$5,000 per year, and a

spring trip for graduating 8th graders to Israel was financed in such a manner as to insure that no child was deprived of the opportunity to go for financial reasons. The Solomon Schechter Day School's PTA is represented on a PTA Council along with representatives of other Chisuk Amuno schools. Dr. Schneider runs a "Middle School Minyan" which meets twice a month in the synagogue and is only for children. Rabbi Seltzer and Rabbi Zaiman each teach courses in the SSDS. Thus human and administrative integration of the school within the larger Chisuk Amuno structure is apparent. Professionals (such as Rabbis Seltzer and Zaiman) are visible within the school and can be effected by their own experiences of contact with students, faculty, staff and parents.

-The Religious School-

Teachers employed by SSDS also teach in the religious school, which maintains classes for grades K through 7. While the total religious school enrollment is 388, class meeting times vary in duration and schedule slots. Kindergarteners and first graders only attend classes on Sundays. Second through seventh graders attend school three days a week for a total of six hours per week.

Now meeting for its third year and with double enrollment over its first year, 26 religious school students in grades 5, 6, and 7 have elected to attend school for two additional hours each Sunday. Students follow the regular curriculum of the six hour program but are the beneficiaries of special programming in the additional two hours. Classes in Torah

cantillation and Zionism have been offered, and the question of possibly using the additional time to develop an enhanced Hebrew language tract has been raised.

Ms. Rita Plaut, who directs this voluntary "enrichment program" is very proud at having received a grant for next year to fund a life history unit. In this unit a geriatric social worker will train students in interviewing techniques; children will collect information from residents of an institution for the elderly; a professional writer will help children translate their interview data into a play; and finally the children will perform their play for their elderly informants. The children will also study traditional Jewish texts related to issues of growing older.

For the last four years Rabbi Jim Rosen, Chisuk Amuno's assistant rabbi, has directed a Hebrew high school program, where alumni of the religious school and SSDS can meet. A typical activity which draws about 100 teenagers is a monthly, Tuesday, social dinner meeting. Until the end of this school year (1992) more serious religious school graduates were encouraged to attend a three session a week BJE program and come to a Havurah study session at Chisuk Amno on Tuesday nights. SSDS alumni were encouraged to participate in a similar BJE structure. By enrolling in any Tuesday evening youth program at Chisuk Amno a student automatically becomes a member of USY. A special student/faculty committee called "Lift" is responsible for social programming. A structural problem or challenge for Chisuk Amno is that eighth graders who are already graduates of the religious school may seek out youth groups separate from the eighth graders who are still students in the Solomon Schechter School.

The following structure and system for accommodating differing interests on the part of students has been designed for next year. Students who chose may attend a weekly, one evening (Tuesday) high school program. Within this program there are two tracks. They may opt for the "bet midrash," which is text oriented; lead by Chisuk Amno rabbis; has homework, grades, and required attendance. Or they may decide to attend the "Havurah" which is centered around discussion. Alumni of Solomon Schechter Day School or serious graduates of the religious school may elect to attend Baltimore's Judaic Academy for two evenings a week and the "bet midrash" at Chisuk Amno on Tuesdays. The religious school and SSDS graduates will be placed in different classes at the Judaic Academy, because of the variation in their levels of Hebrew language skill. All participates of Tuesday evening programs will also be invited to the monthly social dinner. So far, because of the age of the Solomon Schechter Day School, there have only been two graduating classes. To date very few graduates have gone on to day schools, thus sending member children back into the pool of Chisuk Amno young people.

-Pre-School-

Another "school within a school" is the pre-school, which is directed by Mrs. Sandy Lever. Approximately 250 children attend the pre-school. The pre-school accepts children as young as two years of age and goes through pre-k. The pre-school functions as a feeder school for SSDS; in fact, the pre-k class evolved out of need for a class for children

not quite ready to enter Schechter's kindergarten. Interestingly, parents of pre-school graduates who do not intend to send their children to SSDS tend to resist sending their children to Chisuk Amno's kindergarten, choosing to enroll them in the religious school for first grade. Their reasoning seems to be to allow their children more time for transition to "regular" school kindergarten, feeling also that the children have received a lot during their pre-school years.

-Family Education-

Ms. Marietta Jaffe, a graduate of Brandeis' Horenstein program and a teacher within the religious school, directs three family education coordinators who began working with kindergarten and first graders and their families but hope to expand their work upward through the grades. The curriculum for sessions with parents is designed to support what is happening in children's classes. The rich resources of Chisuk Amno are reflected in some of the materials designed for a recent family education event. Children were learning about their Hebrew names. One of Chisuk Amno's three on staff art teachers designed and calligraphed special birth certificates. Parents were supplied with xeroxes of perpetual calendars to look up their children's Hebrew birth dates and fill in the birth certificates. Later parents received mailings of suggested strategies for celebrating Jewish birthdays in educationally enriching ways.

Ms. Jaffe explained the benefits of such programs: a way of informing parents what is happening in class; educating parents themselves; public relations for the school within the entire synagogue.

There are a number of frameworks within which children from the religious school and from Solomon Schechter can interact. Graduates of either school can earn \$5 an hour working as tutors, helping the cantor in the "Hazan's Program." To qualify for this particular program students must demonstrate cantorial proficiency. Religious school aides are also paid \$5 and are required to keep journals describing their work with younger children. According to Jane Rachel, a ninth grader who works as a religious school aide and attended SSDS, the \$5 an hour pay represents an important incentive, giving the program a firmer foundation than if she and her friends served as volunteers. Next year 10 young people have committed themselves to attending a two hour a month education course as well as combined study in the Judaic Academy and Chisuk Amno and journal keeping to work as religious school aides or aides to the Havurah and younger children's youth groups.

-Youth Groups-

There are three youth groups for elementary school students (3rd and 4th graders; 5th and 6th graders; and 7th and 8th graders). Shabbat morning could find the following groups functioning outside of the main sanctuary service: Torah for Tots; Junior Congregation (lead by Rabbi Seltzer and comprised of young families; 2/3s of the children who lead davvening are from SSDS, 1/3 from the religious school); Middle School Minyan (meets two times a month and is only for kids, lead by Dr.

Schneider and attended by SSDS students). Once a month there is a free shabbat lunch attended by any and all "kids" and their parents; at this lunch birthdays are announced.

-Staffing-

While the staff of the religious school is well trained (out of 17 teachers, there are 1 ms.w., 7 ms.ed's, 1 close to finishing ms.ed., 1 ph.d.), what is probably special or unusual about the faculty, according to faculty members interviewed, is the enthusiastic and full time leadership of Stuart Seltzer. Rabbi Seltzer explained that teachers are recruited through the BJE placement service, and their salaries follow the BJE scale. Only two teachers who were members of the faculty four years ago when Rabbi Seltzer began his tenure remain today on the faculty.

What does Rabbi Seltzer look for when hiring a new teacher? Knowledge of subject matter to be taught; ability to present the subject to students; sense of vocation or mission; love of kids; comfortableness in teaching in a Conservative synagogue. (According to Ms. Jaffe, 4 out of 10 teachers with whom she works directly in the school would not drive on shabbat.) Rabbi Seltzer expressed willingness to change curriculum to capitalize on the individual talents of teachers. While he neither requires teachers to submit lesson plans nor schedules formal observations of teaching, he expects teachers to attend monthly administrative staff meetings over dinner and team meetings of teachers working in the same

grade level. He frequently enters classrooms and joins in the children's activities. He will draw and color with children and tells teachers to call on him to answer a question, if he raises his hand. He believes that he has earned the respect of teachers by putting himself "on the line" by teaching at SSDS. Significantly, he is a full time principal of the religious school.

What is the religious school's curriculum, and how did it evolve?

Clearly the BJE's Synagogue Council, which grants an annual subsidy of \$12,000 to Chisuk Amno, as an arena for developing curricular teaching materials, has influence. Rabbi Seltzer maintains that the school's current curriculum grew out of dialogue between the principal and his staff and that he worked with two guiding principles: 1) You can't teach everything; and 2) Each year should be different. Further, he built on what existed when he came to the school and made changes slowly. Some changes he made include: phasing out conversational Hebrew; requiring teachers to design and share with students a "seder shel yom"; encouraging teachers to develop classroom goals which enable him to outline a curricular over-view of the school.

It is Rabbi Seltzer's dream that each classroom teacher begin the year with an itemized document of goals for each student. Next to each goal is a space for the teacher's signature when the goal has been achieved. Currently these documents are in use through the "heh" level and are in the works for higher grades. Curricular content is listed below by grade level.

- Aleph
- Letter identification leading by the end of the year to oral reading - Throughout the grade levels, understanding of Hebrew words is taught. On tests in higher grades students are expected to write Hebrew words, names, etc., in response to questions (i.e. Avraham (in Hebrew) left Haran (in Hebrew). We learn this in Sefer Bereshit (in Hebrew))
 - Melton holiday materials
 - Family education programs orchestrated by Marietta (for example, the moon & the calendar; Jewish birthdays & names)
- Bet
- The year of havdalah; family education program; learning first part of shaharit; Israel; holiday vocabulary; Our Living Past.
- Gimel
- Kaballat shabbat; home rituals; Ron Wolfson's seder shel shabbat materials: Melton work books for Bereshit and kashrut Through their work on kashruth students have become enthusiastic callers with questions to Baltimore's Halacha Hotline. Near the end of the year the Rav who "mans" the hotline visited the class and enabled children to meet the person behind the voice on the telephone.

- Daled - Torah reading, Hagadah sel Pesah, the Book of Exodus
- Heh - Hallel, the Book of Numbers, Rashi through Melton
- Vav - Tikun Olam with reading of Jonah (self); Esther (responsibility); Ruth (extra acts of loving kindness); amidah.

At the completion of the vav year an examination of Jewish knowledge is given. In order to graduate from religious school students must pass this examination. Occasionally students fail and are given an opportunity to re-take the exam. Children failing the examination have been assigned an alternative: reading five books and writing reports. It has happened that a child did not pass the examination, chose not to fulfill an alternative assignment and was not allowed to graduate.

At the end of the school year summer homework and/or reading lists are handed out.

Rabbi Seltzer identifies as one of his strengths the ability to create affective and effective school wide events and credits his years of experience working in Ramah camps as the source of this knowledge. What follows below are two of this observer's favorite examples.

1) For Yom ha Shoah an enormous collage type poster was created by teachers and artists in the school. The poster consisted of a map of Europe with photographs illustrating Jewish creativity and life which was native to particular cities and regions. Children were asked to look at the poster very carefully and speculate about the people who lived before the Second World War in locations depicted on the poster. Next as the story of the Shoah was told, the poster was cut up into many fragments. Children were given only a very small percentage of the remanent of the poster and told that they could try to create another collage working with poster paper on which were identified cities that had received refugees after the war: Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Montreal, New York, etc. The children became so engrossed in their attempt at reconstruction that the school day ended and they did not want to leave their project. Thus they participated in a graphic illustration of destruction and resurrection

2) "Rabbis and Romans" is a game played in celebration of Lag b'Omer on the wide lawns and playing field of Chisuk Amno. Areas are marked as caves and tunnels, which are safe spaces. Children are divided into two teams: Rabbis and Romans. Midway through the game, a whistle is blown and children switch. (Rabbis become Romans, and Romans become rabbis.) Each teaching of Pirke Avot is cut out on a separate slip of paper. Rabbis can only learn Pirke Avot in a safe place, but a whistle is blown to limit time available in any given cave or tunnel. The winner of the game is the team of rabbis who has learned the most Pirke Avot. A rabbi captured by a Roman can no longer learn Pirke Avot. Perhaps the nicest aspect of

the game is that the rules were worked out by Jacob, a young teaching aide in the school.

-Measuring Success-

By what yardstick can success of Chisuk Amno's schools be measured? If enrollment is a standard, then clearly the programs are successful; witness the religious school's teacher roster which shows an increment of numbers of classes in each grade level with the largest number or increases paralleling Rabbi Seltzer's presence within the school. According to teachers, SSDS and religious school students are meeting positively within the walls of Chisuk Amno, acknowledging differences in their educations (especially in Hebrew language) but also finding commonality in Jewish commitment. While this positive vision could only be validated through extensive interviewing of students and parents, Rabbi Seltzer in part accounts for the successful integration in the following way: By hiring him as a full time professional devoted to the religious school, the synagogue's leadership made an important statement about their valuing of and commitment to the legitimacy of the supplementary school and its programs. (Other strategies for positive integration have been noted above.)

The apparent success of Chisuk Amno in terms of increasing enrollment and expressed enthusiasm on the part of faculty, administration and students is contradictory to both current demographic studies and patterns observed within the United Synagogue. When asked

about the apparent contradiction, Rabbi Seltzer joked, "Welcome to Toronto." By this he meant that Baltimore itself represents a more traditional Jewish community than many other U.S. cities.

In terms of implicit goals of nurturing positive Jewish identity and commitment, Rabbi Seltzer and teachers eagerly cite examples of children and teenagers who devote extra time and effort to programs within the synagogue and to such positive affect and enthusiasm in classrooms as manifested by Ms. Sima Leah Cohen's fourth grader skit writers or Dr. Moshe Shualy's video interviewers.

It should be pointed out that from those interviewed, two themes explaining success were most frequently articulated. Rabbi Seltzer, himself, was praised enthusiastically, and Rabbi Zaiman was credited with significant administrative acumen in creating the organizational structure within the synagogue's educational programs. It should be noted that one of Rabbi Seltzer's first tasks, assigned by Rabbi Zaiman, as he entered Chisuk Amno's employ was to write an administrative manual for the religious school. Finally it should be appreciated that the synagogue both had money and leadership which enabled it to seek skilled and talented professional staff.

Chisuk Amno Congregation _____ Kathy Green

June 1992

not quite ready to enter Schechter's kindergarten. Interestingly, parents of pre-school graduates who do not intend to send their children to SSDS tend to resist sending their children to Chisuk Amno's kindergarten, choosing to enroll them in the religious school for first grade. Their reasoning seems to be to allow their children more time for transition to "regular" school kindergarten, feeling also that the children have received a lot during their pre-school years.

-Family Education-

Ms. Marietta Jaffe, a graduate of Brandeis' Horenstein program and a teacher within the religious school, directs three family education coordinators who began working with kindergarten and first graders and their families but hope to expand their work upward through the grades. The curriculum for sessions with parents is designed to support what is happening in children's classes. The rich resources of Chisuk Amno are reflected in some of the materials designed for a recent family education event. Children were learning about their Hebrew names. One of Chisuk Amno's three on staff art teachers designed and calligraphed special birth certificates. Parents were supplied with xeroxes of perpetual calendars to look up their children's Hebrew birth dates and fill in the birth certificates. Later parents received mailings of suggested strategies for celebrating Jewish birthdays in educationally enriching ways.

Ms. Jaffe explained the benefits of such programs: a way of informing parents what is happening in class; educating parents themselves; public relations for the school within the entire synagogue.

Cover Sheet

Best Practice in the Supplementary School

(For Individual Schools)

REPORT BY: Kathy Green

Date June 1992

Name of the School B'nai Heshet (Reconstructionist)

Address Church St. & Trinity Place
Montclair, N.J.

Contact Person at School: Rabbi Dan Chukhrentz
and his or her

Position: Synagogue Rabbi

Approximate Number of Students 85

From ages 3 to 12

Number of Teachers: 10

Approximate budget (if available) _____

What particular emphases of this school are worth noting

(e.g. Hebrew focus; teacher education emphasis; rabbi-school relationship,
etc.):

Family Education Program

B'nai Keshet is a thirteen year old Reconstructionist congregation of 125 family unit members. It is a tenant of a Baptist church and meets in a section of the church building at the corner of Church Street and Trinity Place in Montclair, N.J. When Dan Ehrenkrantz, B'nai Keshet's rabbi for the last four years and a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, came to the congregation, he perceived a need for family education, a vehicle for reaching out to adults and children. He began, in consultation with members of the Education Committee and the Hebrew school principal, to design a proposal for a family education program.

Further consultation with representatives of the JEA lead him to craft a grant proposal which met with positive response on the part of the Jewish Community Foundation of MetroWest, a New Jersey Jewish Federation group. Rabbi Ehrenkrantz proposed and received a grant of \$14,100 to fund half of a five year, family education program. At this point in time (June 1992) curricula for three years of the program have been written, and two years of the program have been implemented. The synagogue has matched MetroWest's funding, absorbing the program's cost within the larger synagogue budget. Frugality has allowed Rabbi Ehrenkrantz and his staff to spend grant money at a slower rate than initially anticipated, thus extending the amount of time that the money is lasting.

Early on Rabbi Ehrenkrantz enlisted the aide of Rabbi Jeffrey Schein, who directs educational services for the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot. Rabbi Schein, collaborating with Rabbi Ehrenkrantz, became the curriculum writer for the program. Rabbi

Ehrenkrantz saw himself as "implementor" who would test curricular ideas and supply "feedback" to adapt and modify the curriculum as it evolved. Shortly before the program actually began, Rabbi Schein paid a visit to B'nai Keshet and offered a teacher training in-service session to help acquaint faculty with the curriculum.

What no one, including Rabbi Ehrenkrantz, could have anticipated as the program was being initiated was the profound, ripple effect it would have on the nature of B'nai Keshet as a whole. This report will first focus on the family education program, its structure, goals and evaluation, and will later turn to considering some of the larger effects of the program on the congregation.

-HEBREW SCHOOL-

The family education program exists within the context of the synagogue's school, which now has an enrollment of 85 children. The pattern of attendance in the school is as follows: three and four year olds come to the school one Sunday a month; five to seven year olds attend every Sunday for two hours; and eight through twelve year olds attend Sunday mornings for three hours and late afternoons on Wednesday, totalling five hours per week. There is also a pattern of required attendance of Shabbat services; the pattern and its increments per year are as follows: three year olds - two services; four year olds - three services; five year olds - five; six year olds - eight; and seven year olds and above - twenty-eight. Older children, approaching bar/bat mitzvah,

join Rabbi Ehrenkrantz on the bimah and help lead services. The general curriculum of the Hebrew school includes the Behrman House series as a tool for teaching reading of siddur. Growth in numbers of students in the Hebrew school parallels Rabbi Ehrenkrantz's tenure in the synagogue with numbers increasing incrementally from the lower grades up. Currently ten teachers work in the school; it is hard to make statements about stability of teacher tenure; Rabbi Ehrenkrantz reports that some of the teachers have been at B'nai Keshet for several years while others represent rapid turnover.

-STAFF-

Two teachers are working, one with each thematic year, in the family education program. In contrast to the common expectation of finding women teaching in Hebrew schools, at the end of this school year all those working with the family education program were men. The staff consists of the synagogue's rabbi, the Hebrew school principal, and two teachers. What the two teachers most significantly share in common is extensive time living in Israel. Tom Guthertz, now a student at HUC/JIR, previously worked for five years as a teacher on kibbutz and also comes to B'nai Keshet with a number of years experience as a HaBonim camp counselor. Joe Friedland lived in Israel on a Shomer haZair kibbutz from 1968 until 1980. He comes to B'nai Keshet with previous experience teaching in Hebrew schools but is employed as the vice president for production of a northern New Jersey manufacturing company and sees his teaching as a "labor of love." Harvey Ritter, the school principal, is regularly employed as a public school psychologist; he also is a veteran of elementary age

yeshivah education. Mr. Ritter came to B'nai Keshet a year before Rabbi Ehrenkrantz. Rabbi Ehrenkrantz explained what he looks for in hiring a teacher: We are seeking teaching skill and Jewish knowledge. When we are lucky, we get both!

-FAMILY EDUCATION STRUCTURE-

Within a context of expected attendance, family education is structured in the following ways. Year long themes have been chosen for five years of schooling. In the first year of the program, when students are eight years old and in the aleph year of Hebrew school, the theme is Hidur Mitzvah. The next year's theme for bet class students and their families is Mentschlichkeit; the following year is devoted to Tzionut. Themes for the fourth and fifth years are Kedusha and Tikkun Olam/ Hokhma, respectively. (Translations of these theme names are provided at the beginning of the school year but are rapidly dropped with the intent that the terminology enter the participants' vernacular.)

On what basis were these topics chosen? They seem to have emerged from dialogue between Rabbi Schein and Rabbi Ehrenkrantz and reflect articulated values found within the Reconstructionist movement in general and in particular in Creative Jewish Education, edited by Jacob Stuebel and Jeff Schein (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Rossel Books, c. 1985).

There are four components for presenting material related to a theme in any given year. One hour of student class time on Sunday morning is

devoted to the topic. Mr. Friedland, who taught Bet students in the Mentschlichkeit program this year, spoke enthusiastically about student responses. He would read scenarios from Earl Schwartz's Moral Development: A Practical Guide for Jewish Teachers (Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., c. 1983) and encourage nine year olds to debate their responses. He found that students quickly became involved in arguing and defending their positions. He also used Molly Cone's Who Knows Ten as a trigger for discussion and contrasted positive levels of attentiveness with their involvement when he taught materials not in the family education program.

Another component of the program is requiring that children and their parents do projects at home together. This is accomplished by sending materials home for parents and children to work on together, for example, families in the Hidur Mitzvah year were asked to search their houses or apartments for objects which made their homes identifiably Jewish. On another occasion they were asked to chose a quotation from Pirke Avot which they found most meaningful and create an art project illustrating the quote for display in their homes.

Still another aspect of the program is adult education sessions on Sunday mornings for parents. Topics for such sessions might include the origin of the menorah as a symbol at Hanukah time; or a psychologist leading a session on mentschlicht ways of interacting with children and stragies for encouraging mentschlicht behavior in children. During the Mentschlichkeit year adults attended a session devoted to ethical wills. At the end of the class they were not asked to write ethical wills but rather were asked to list values and ideals which they hope to

hand down to their children. They were then told that their children's class would compile a list of values and ideals which they believed their parents wanted to inculcate, and the lists would be compared. These adult sessions which occur three times a year for each year's theme are generally lead by Rabbi Ehrenkrantz and occasionally by a paid, expert, guest speaker. The sessions are separate from adult education courses taught in the synagogue.

Adults and children join together for three sessions on Sunday mornings. A classic parent-child session was a trip to a Jewish museum when Hidur Mitzvah was being studied. In the Menschlichkeit program parents and children chose to hand out leaflets about recycling and environmental concerns at a local shopping mall.

-UPON REFLECTION-

What Rabbi Ehrenkrantz perceives as unique about B'nai Keshet's family education program is the combination of thematic approach with varying matrixes of interaction (teacher/children; parents/children at home; teacher/adults; parents/children in trips or special events). This year there were twelve children in the Hidur Mitzvah theme year; they came, as Rabbi Ehrenkrantz quips, from ten and a half families (two twins and two step-siblings were part of the program). Sixteen children in the Menschlichkeit program this year represented fifteen families, accounted for by the presence of one set of twins.

Attendance is expected, and either Rabbi Ehrenkrantz or Mr. Ritter, the Hebrew school's principal, try to follow up absence with a

telephone call. Unanticipated when the program was being planned was the situation of a family with more than one child in close age proximity. In such a circumstance Rabbi Ehrenkrantz suggested to a mother that she give priority to any program which included her children and "cut" adult education classes in which material being presented seemed similar to what was addressed the previous year. This is an example of idiosyncratic details that could not be planned for in advance.

According to Mr. Ritter and Rabbi Ehrenkrantz, parental reactions have been positive and enthusiastic. Rabbi Ehrenkrantz could think of a family with young children that joined the synagogue in part because of the positive image of educational outreach to families. He also notes that the synagogue, although numerically small, fills its calendar with as many events as much larger and better staffed institutions. That means that demands are made upon congregants which, combined with expectation of participation in on-going family education programs, has lead a few families to leave the congregation.

-GOALS-

What goals did Rabbi Ehrenkrantz formulate as he talked about the family education program? He began by discussing the importance of Jews learning about such concepts as hidur mitzvah or menschlichkeit. "In a non-Halacchic age, how are people going to find themselves Jewishly? Perhaps they can be helped by refracting their lives through such concepts (as menschlichkeit or hidur mitzvah). We can influence the culture of the family. We can bring new vocabulary and symbols into the home." Rabbi Ehrenkrantz sees the program as being good for children to see their

parents in Hebrew school and good for parents to see what efforts their children are exerting in school. He believes that the program is enhancing parents' Jewish educations and allowing parents who perceive themselves as Jewishly ignorant to function in modest, teaching roles with their children. A fringe benefit of the program is that by gathering parents of young children together and molding them into a group, they become a support group for one another as their children approach bar and bat mitzvah. Furthermore, the rabbi and school staff have had an opportunity to influence positively families' values and expectations as they prepare for bnai/bnot mitzvah. Another benefit of the program is that of families with Hebrew school age children about 20 per cent are inter-married. Thus the adult education aspect of the programs facilitates reaching out to non-Jewish spouses. Parents are required by the family education program to come into the school for six Sunday mornings during the year; over a five year period minimally they have attended thirty educational sessions.

-RIPPLES-

Perhaps most interesting is the ripple effect of the program on the demography of the synagogue. The synagogue is young, with many young families and a youthful rabbi. The number of young families means that it is not unreasonable to anticipate that as the initial five year program is completed roughly half the members of the congregation will have participated in the family education program. Because the program is continuous, it will take a family with one child six years to become an alumni of the program; the more children, the longer the involvement. Rabbi Ehrenkrantz hopes, in fact, in the future not only to publish the

program as a model for use elsewhere but also to design a similar scheme for nursery school children. Thus as time passes, it does not seem unlikely that more and more of the synagogue's identity, public image, and activities will be associated with family education.

-EVALUATION-

When asked by what criteria the program could be evaluated, Rabbi Ehrenkrantz and his staff all pointed to "positive feedback," enthusiastic comments, attendance, attentiveness and involvement on the part of students. The program has received positive reviews from the JEA, laudatory local newspaper publicity and an award from the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot. When asked what might be done to improve the program, the following ideas emerged: planning long in advance with guest speakers in place and on the synagogue calendar as much as a year in advance; clearer, more explicit statements of curricula for teachers; more staff meetings; either a loose leaf binder or its equivalent on computer which would serve as a schedule diary and tell the user "now is the time to send out reminder notices, etc."; greater consistency in follow up telephone calls to parents.

Rabbi Ehrenkrantz explained that he was more intimately involved in the administration of the program during its first year (1990-91) and because of other responsibilities within the congregation pulled back a little this year and gave the school principal more responsibility. He believes that as the program continues to grow, more administrative time will be necessarily devoted to the enterprise. That will mean either up

grading the principal's job from half to three quarters or full time or hiring someone to act purely as family education administrator.

A problem within the synagogue which is not addressed by the family education program is what to do with post Hebrew school children who will be veterans of the family education project. At this point a few children go on to a regional Hebrew high school; a fledgling, faltering youth group is beginning. Rabbi Ehrenkrantz is very proud that this year (in contrast to one student last year) eight or nine teenagers from the congregation are going to HaBonim's camp Galil.



B'nai Keshet _____ Kathy Green

June 1992

Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
Best Practices Project
Barry W. Holtz

Guide for Looking at Best Practice in the Supplementary School

A "best practice" supplementary school should be a place...:

I. Systemic Issues

a. --with well articulated educational and "Jewish" goals
[What are those goals and by what means are they articulated? Meetings? Publications? Sermons?]

[What are the outcomes that the school seeks to achieve and how does the school measure success?]

b. --where stakeholders (such as parents, teachers, laypeople) are involved in the articulation or at least the validation, of these goals in an ongoing way
[What is the process by which this articulation and involvement happens?]

c. --with shared communication and an ongoing vision
[How do we see this in the day to day life of the school?]

d. --where one feels good to be there and students enjoy learning
[In what way do you see this? What is the atmosphere in classes? The nature of student behavior and "discipline"?]

e. --where students continue their Jewish education after Bar/Bat Mitzvah
[Does the school have actual data about this?]

II. Curriculum and Instruction Issues

a. --which takes curriculum seriously and has a serious, well-defined curriculum
[Is it a written curriculum? Do they use materials published by the denominational movements? By commercial publishers?]

b. --and in which, therefore, students are learning real "content"
[Do you have a sense of what the students learn? About Jewish religious life and practice? Moral principles? History? Hebrew language? Israel, etc. In what way, if any, does the school monitor student progress?]

Holtz--3

- c. --in which one sees interesting and "strong" teaching
[Is there a particular style of teaching that you see in the school? (Discussions? Lectures? Group work? etc.) Who are the teachers? What is their Jewish educational background and preparation? What is their relationship to the students? What is the stability of the staff over time? What does the school do to help new teachers enter the school?
- d. --in which one sees attention given to "affective" experiences for children
[Is there occasion for "practice" in Jewish living or values? For example, is there a tzedakah project, an Israel project, a mitzvah project in the school? Is there a Junior congregation or other opportunity for experiencing prayer? Are there programs in the arts--music, dance, etc? Is there a retreat or shabbaton program for children?
- d. --with family or parent education programs
[What does the school do in this area? Do they use any specific materials or programs? (which ones?) How often does this happen? Is there a retreat or shabbaton program for families? Are parents required to engage in some kind of adult learning? In what way?]

III. Supervision Issues

- a. --which engages in regular serious inservice education and/or supervision of teachers
[Who does the supervision? What is it like? How regular is it? Does the school use outside consultants for inservice? Are teachers sent to inservice sessions? Where and in what way does this take place? Is there a retreat or shabbaton program for teachers?]
- b. --with an effective principal who serves as a true educational leader
[In what way does the principal demonstrate this leadership? How do the teachers...the parents....the rabbi perceive him/her?

Obviously, the group of experts recognized that not every one of these items would be in place in every school. (In that case we would have an "ideal" school and that is not our agenda here.) But some significant constellation of the above should be in place for a school to make it on to the inventory.

Holtz--4

Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education
Best Practices Project
Barry W. Holtz

A Guide for Looking at Best Practice in the Early Childhood
Jewish Education

A "best practice" site should be a place....:

I. System and Site

- a. ...with a clearly defined philosophy of early childhood education and early childhood Jewish education?
What are those goals and by what means are they articulated? How does the place communicate with its public? Through meetings? Publications?

How does the place handle the issue of recruitment? Is it particularly effective in this area and how does recruitment operate?

- b. ...with strong parental involvement
How is this implemented?
By parental involvement in the governance of the school?
By actual parental involvement in the program's activities?
By family education activities?
By discussion of goals?
By ongoing communication between the program and home?
Do the parents understand the nature of the school's curriculum?

- c. ...where parents feel welcome and not "threatened"
Describe any specific activities
Does the school do anything to deal with the issue of intermarried families?

- d. ...with involvement in the local community, particularly the synagogue(s)
How is this implemented? Do the children participate in communal activities like tzedakah projects or Israel-related events?
Do local rabbis and Jewish leaders have contact with the program? Are they invited in? Do the rabbis see the program as a benefit for their institutions?

Holtz--5

- e. ...where the school/program itself becomes a kind of community or family?
How is this seen in the program? What means are used to accomplish this?
- f. ...with a safe and inviting physical environment?
Describe what this looks like.
Do you know that this is a Jewish place from its physical setting?
- g. ...where the children go on to further Jewish education, either formal or informal
Does the school have actual data about this?
What is the impact of the program on the individual family?
On the community itself?
What are the linkages to other Jewish institutions?
- h. ...where one feels good to be there and students enjoy being there
In what way do you see this? What is the atmosphere in the place?

II. The Educational Program

- a. ...with an educationally appropriate environment?
Describe what this looks like.
- b. ...with an appropriate "Jewish environment."
Describe what this looks like.
- c. ...with a developmentally appropriate educational practice in an "emotionally safe" environment
- d. ...with a clear and articulated curriculum
Does one see:
 - language-rich experiences
 - integration of content and play
 - integration of Jewish and general content
 - use of the arts
 - specific themes
- e. ...with an emphasis on teaching good values, on teaching Jewish values.
How is this done? Is there a written curriculum?
- f. ...in which the program is involved in ongoing self-evaluation.
How is this done? Do we have anything written?

Holtz--6

III. Staff and Supervision

- a. ...with good teachers who exhibit a high degree of professionalism
- b. ...who are good Jewish role models
 - Who are the teachers? What is their training and educational background?

What is their Jewish educational background and preparation? What is their relationship to the students?

What is the stability of the staff over time?

What does the school do to help new teachers enter the school?

Does the school use non-Jewish teachers? How does it deal with that issue?

- c. ...which has a strong professional development program in place

What does the school do to encourage professional development? Do teachers receive encouragement through salary incentives? Does the school pay for teachers to attend professional development programs?

Does the school engage in regular, serious inservice education for the teachers?

Does the school do supervision of teachers?

Who does the supervision?

What is it like? How regular is it?

Does the school use outside consultants for inservice?

Are teachers sent to inservice sessions or professional conferences? Where and in what way does this take place? Is there a retreat or shabbaton program for teachers?

- d. ...which values the teachers and deals well with issues of morale, status and salary

How does the school boost staff morale?

How does it retain staff?

Are the teachers paid well?

How does the school handle issues of salary and benefits?

Holtz--7

- e. ...with an effective director who serves as a true educational leader

In what way does the director demonstrate this leadership? How do the teachers...the parents....the rabbi perceive him/her?

IV. Specific Educational Programs in Place

Describe if the school uses particular early childhood educational programs and in what way are they effective such as:

whole language approach
Montessori
Bank Street
Cooperative learning
High scope
etc.

Describe any interesting approaches to specific Jewish content areas such as:

teaching Bible
Hebrew
Israel
Jewish living and practice
Tzedakah
etc.

Describe any interesting approaches to the integration of Jewish and general educational content

Obviously, The group recognized that not every one of these items would be in place in every school. (In that case we would have an "ideal" school and that, of course, is not our agenda here.) But some significant constellation of the above should be in place for a school to make it on to the inventory.

Page 12

Memo

January 5, 1993

To: CIJE Senior Advisers

From: Barry W. Holtz

Re: Update-- The Best Practices Project

Introduction

In describing its "blueprint for the future," A Time to Act, the report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, called for the creation of "an inventory of best educational practices in North America" (p. 69).

The primary purpose of this inventory is to help the CIJE in its work with the three Lead Communities (Atlanta, Baltimore, Milwaukee) which were selected last summer. As the Lead Communities devise their educational plans and put these plans into action, the Best Practices inventory will offer a guide to Jewish educational success that can be adapted for use in particular Lead Communities.

In addition, the Best Practices Project hopes to make an important contribution to the knowledge base about North American Jewish education by documenting outstanding educational work that is currently taking place.

The Best Practices Project as of today

This past year has been spent in designing a methodology for conducting a project that has never really been done in Jewish education before in such a wide-scale fashion. How do we locate examples of best practice in Jewish education? As the year has proceeded both an approach to the work and a set of issues to explore has evolved. We began by identifying the specific programmatic "areas" in Jewish education on which to focus. These were primarily the venues in which Jewish education is conducted such as supplementary schools, JCCs, day schools etc. A best practices team is being developed for each of these areas. These teams are supervised by Dr. Shulamith Elster and me.

We have come to refer to each of the different areas as a "division," in the business sense of the word. (Thus the Best Practices Project has a supplementary school division, an early childhood division, etc.) Each division's work has two phases. Phase 1 is a meeting of experts to talk about best practice in the area and to help develop the criteria for assessing "success"; Phase 2 is the site visit and report writing done by members of the team.

Last year four different divisions were launched. We began with the supplementary school primarily because we knew that a) there was a general feeling in the community, particularly in the lay community, that the supplementary school had not succeeded; b) because the majority of Jewish children get their education in the supplementary school and because of that perception of failure, the Lead Communities would certainly want to address the "problem" of the supplementary school; c) as the director of the project, it was the area in which I had the most experience and best sense of whom I could turn to for assistance and counsel.

A group of experts was gathered together to discuss the issue of best practice in the supplementary school. Based on that meeting I then wrote a Best Practices in the Supplementary School guide. A team of report writers was assembled and assignments were given to the team to locate both good schools and good elements or programs within schools (such as parent education programs).

We now have reports on ten schools as written up by the group members. The first results indicate that, indeed, there are successful supplementary schools and we are finding

representative places that are worth hearing about and seeing. In the spirit of Professor Lee Shulman's talk at the 1991 GA, we have discovered real examples that "prove the existence" of successful supplementary schools. These are sites that people in the Lead Communities can look at, visit and learn from.

In May Dr. Elster and I launched our second division, early childhood Jewish education. We met with a group of experts (see Appendix) in this field and following up that meeting I wrote a Guide to Best Practice in Jewish Early Childhood Education. Many of the members of the group have already agreed to join our team of report writers. We now have the first drafts of reports on ten programs and sites.

A third division, education in the JCC world, is in the early stages of development. Dr. Elster and I met with a team of staff people at the JCCA. Mr. Lenny Rubin of the JCCA is putting together a group of JCCA staff and in-the-field practitioners to develop the Phase 1 "guidelines" for this area. We will work with them in writing up the document. After this is completed a team of report writers (from that group and others) will be assembled to do the actual write-ups.

Finally, a fourth area-- best practices in the Israel Experience-- has been launched thanks to the work of the CRB Foundation. The Foundation has funded a report on success in Israel Experience programming which was written by Dr. Steven M. Cohen and Ms. Susan Wall. The CIJE Best Practices Project will be able to use this excellent report as the basis of further explorations in this area, as needed by the Lead Communities.

The 1992-1993 Year

Next Steps

We are now beginning to put together a Preliminary Guide to Best Practice for each of the "areas" of Jewish education. These Guides will serve the three Lead Communities in their planning process by offering examples of success and suggestions for specific improvements that could be implemented. The first Guide will be devoted to the Supplementary School area. This Guide will contain: an introduction to the concept of Best Practice, an overview of the specific area of the Supplementary School-- what characterizes a successful Supplementary School with suggestions for practical applications, the full reports (using pseudonyms) of the report writers, executive summaries of each of the full reports, and an appendix listing the researchers who have been involved in the project. Of course such a Guide will continue to grow and deepen as the research effort into Best Practice continues and subsequent "editions" of the Guides in each of the areas will expand the knowledge base for action. We hope to have the first edition of the Supplementary School area done by the beginning of February.

Following upon that publication we hope to create a second Guide in the area of Early Childhood programs which will appear about two months after the Supplementary School Guide.

During the 1992-3 year we are also launching the following areas: day schools, adult education, camping and the college campus. Each presents its own interesting challenges. Of these we have already begun to plan in a preliminary way for the day schools division. The current plan is to have each school that is written up be analyzed for one particular area of excellence and not for its over all "goodness." Thus we would have X school written up for its ability to teach modern Hebrew speaking; another for its text teaching; another for its parent education programs; another for its in-service education, etc.

Lead Communities: Implementation-- and How to do it

Aside from launching the other divisions mentioned above the other main initiative of the Best Practices Project for the coming year will be thinking through the issue of best practices and Lead Communities. Professor Seymour Fox has often spoken about the Best Practices Project as creating the "curriculum" for change in the Lead Communities. The challenge this year is to develop the method by which the Lead Community planners and educators can learn from the best practices that we have documented and begin to introduce adaptations of those ideas into their own communities. This can occur through a wide range of activities including: site visits by Lead Community planners to observe best practices in action; visits by best practices practitioners to the Lead Communities; workshops with educators in the Lead Communities, etc. The Best Practices Project will be involved in developing this process of implementation in consultation with the Lead Communities and with other members of the CIJE staff.

From Best Practice to New Practice

On other occasions we have spoken about the need to go beyond best practices in order to develop new ideas in Jewish education. At times we have referred to this as the "department of dreams." We believe that two different but related matters are involved here: first, all the new ideas in Jewish education that the energy of the CIJE and the Lead Community Project might be able to generate and second, the interesting ideas in Jewish education that people have talked about, perhaps even written about, but never have had the chance to try out. It is likely that developing these new ideas will come under the rubric of the Best Practices Project and it is our belief that the excitement inherent in the Lead Community Project will give us the opportunity to move forward with imagining innovative new plans and projects for Jewish educational change.

APPENDIX

Team Members: Best Practice in the Supplementary School

Report Writers:

Ms. Kathy Green (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Philadelphia)
Ms. Carol Ingall (Melton Research Center and BJE, Providence, RI)
Dr. Samuel Joseph (HUC-Cincinnati)
Ms. Vicky Kelman (Melton Research Center and Berkeley, CA)
Dr. Joseph Reimer (Brandeis University)
Dr. Stuart Schoenfeld (York University, Toronto)
Dr. Michael Zeldin (HUC-LA)

Additional Consultants:

Dr. Isa Aron (HUC-Los Angeles)
Ms. Gail Dorph (University Of Judaism, Los Angeles)
Dr. Samuel Heilman (Queens College, NY)

Team Members: Early Childhood Jewish Education

Report Writers

Dr. Miriam Feinberg (Washington, DC);
Dr. Ruth Pinkenson Feldman (Philadelphia);
Ms. Jane Perman (JCC Association);
Ms. Esther Friedman (Houston);
Ms. Esther Elfenbaum (Los Angeles);
Ms. Ina Regosin (Milwaukee);
Ms. Charlotte Muchnick (Haverford, PA);
Ms. Rena Rotenberg (Baltimore);
Ms. Shulamit Gittelson (North Miami Beach);
Ms. Lucy Cohen (Montreal);
Ms. Roanna Shorofsky (New York);
Ms. Marvell Ginsburg (Chicago).