

Making Jewish Education Work:

Community Hebrew High Schools

Lessons Learned from Research

and Evaluation in the Field

REPORT
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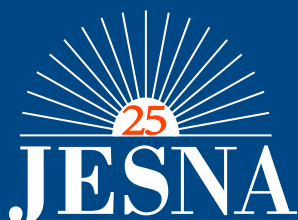


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The PDP, an initiative of JESNA's Learnings and Consultation Center (LCC) aims to improve the delivery of Jewish education in North America by bringing the expert procedural and content knowledge that resides within JESNA to practitioners and policymakers in the field. JESNA's research and evaluation functions — performed primarily by the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education — have generated valuable lessons and usable data, which have been collected over the years through our work with communities. Intellectual capital is one of the primary resources JESNA contributes in order to lead the field of Jewish education toward consistent excellence. The role of the PDP is to leverage this intellectual capital by bringing it to the public arena using multiple media.

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- Produces print and electronic publications on topics of importance to the Jewish education field based on the coupling of Berman Center evaluation studies and research projects with secondary sources.
- Distributes utilizable research and evaluation-based knowledge about Jewish education to those in the field through written, electronic, and face-to-face media.
- Publicizes lessons learned at academic and communal conferences and convenes thematic consultations and colloquia.



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Acknowledgements

JESNA wishes to thank the following people who contributed their insights and energy to this report: members of the North American Association of Community Hebrew High Schools (NAACHHS) for offering valuable suggestions about an early draft; Margie Berkowitz (Prozdor, Hebrew College, Boston, MA), Ari Goldberg (Jewish Community High School of Gratz College, Philadelphia, PA, and President of NAACHHS), Erica Hruby (Beit Hamidrash, Maitland, FL), Devorah Silverman (JESNA), and Richard Walter (Midrasha Community High School, Providence, RI) for their detailed feedback; and Rachel Brumberg and Tahl Stein for copy-editing the manuscript.

JESNA's Publication and Dissemination Project is funded by a generous grant from the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation.

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Introduction

For many Jewish adolescents, becoming b'nai mitzvah marks the end of their Jewish educational experience. Typically, teenagers' Jewish involvement steadily declines after age 13, with the b'nai mitzvah marking the termination of Jewish education and a hiatus from participation in Jewish activities.¹ With the recent survey of 1,300 b'nai mitzvah ages 13 to 17 from Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and independent congregations, researchers at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies have developed the first comprehensive picture of the attitudes and behaviors of contemporary young Jews. Authors of the *Jewish Adolescent Study* (JAS) report that young Jews' weekly participation in Jewish educational, volunteer, and recreational activity declined steadily from 60% in 7th grade to 22% in 11th grade.²

Research has also shown that Jewish education can exert a “discernible positive impact upon Jewish identity.”³ According to Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein: “Jewish education is one of the most effective tools for producing Jewishly identified adults.”⁴ While some Jewish education in childhood has “little impact on Jewish attitudes and behaviors during adult years,” extensive Jewish education, Fishman and Goldstein report, is related to “greater ritual observance, greater likelihood of belonging to and attending synagogues, greater levels of volunteerism for Jewish causes, and greater chances of marrying a Jew.”⁵ The proven influence of six or more years of Jewish education provides a compelling reason to support community Hebrew high schools. By influencing the availability, accessibility, affordability, and attractiveness of different types of formal and informal Jewish education, Jewish communities can have substantial impact.⁶ Community Hebrew high schools can provide high quality post-bar/bat mitzvah educational experiences with positive and lasting impact.

Increasing awareness about the impact of multiple and ongoing Jewish educational experiences on Jewish identity formation has led to concerted efforts to retain teens in Jewish educational settings.⁷ Today, teen education is receiving increased scholarly and communal attention. As noted above, The Institute for Informal Jewish Education (IJS), in partnership with the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, sponsored the most extensive and in-depth empirical study of Jewish teens in North America to date. “Being A Jewish Teenager in America: Trying to Make It,” by Charles Kadushin, Shaul Kelner, and Leonard Saxe focuses on a representative sample of adolescents in the Boston area.⁸ In 2005, the two organizations partnered again to collect data about the 68 community-based Hebrew high schools in the United States.⁹

Significantly, the majority of children who engage in Jewish education are enrolled in supplementary schools. In his appeal for communities to invest in supplementary schooling, Jack Wertheimer points to the critical need to develop a supplementary school initiative. Curricular and programmatic guidance would help communities bolster their programming for Jewish teens.¹⁰ He suggests that supplementary high



“Today, teen education is receiving increased scholarly and communal attention.”

¹ Charles Kadushin, Shaul Kelner, and Leonard Saxe, *Being a Jewish Teenager in America: Trying to Make It* (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2000), iv.

² *Ibid.*, 1.

³ Steven M. Cohen and Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, *The Impact of Childhood Jewish Education on Adults' Jewish Identity: Schooling, Israel Travel, Camping and Youth Groups* (United Jewish Communities Report Series on the National Jewish Populations Survey 2000-01, 2004), 15.

⁴ Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein, *When They Are Grown They Will Not Depart: Jewish Education and Jewish Behavior of American Adults* (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University and Jewish Education Service of North America, 1993), 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷ Jack Wertheimer, *Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today* (Avi Chai, 2005), 8.

⁸ Kadushin, Kelner, and Saxe, *Being a Jewish Teenager in America: Trying to Make It*.

⁹ Annette Koren, *Community-Based Hebrew High Schools 2005* (Institute for Informal Jewish Education and Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2005).

schools are particularly worthy of support, since those schools tend to attract teens whose personal commitments and family backgrounds have positively disposed them to Jewish engagement.¹¹

This report contributes to the growing body of knowledge about community Hebrew high schools by drawing upon multiple sources originating from Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA) and its Berman Center for Research and Evaluation. The Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA serves as a central information resource on Jewish educational research and evaluation for federations, central agencies for Jewish education, national and international organizations, and the media. Since its establishment in 1992, the Berman Center has conducted over 150 program evaluations, environmental scans, needs assessment studies, and descriptive research projects.

Community Hebrew high schools have been a significant area of focus for Berman Center researchers. This report draws upon knowledge that was gleaned during the course of research and evaluation on such programs. Lessons learned from Berman Center evaluations of five community Hebrew high schools between 1999 and 2005 are synthesized and discussed thematically in this report. Insights are included from evaluations of: Delaware Gratz High School, San Diego High School of Jewish Studies, San Francisco High School Havurah,¹² The Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches' community-wide programs for teens, and the Peninsula Havurah High School.¹³ *Appendix A: About the Evaluations* provides background information about each of these schools, and describes the main goals and methodological approaches of each evaluation.

Information has also been included about 17 community Hebrew high school programs selected through a reputation-based sample (i.e. by asking respected educators for nominations of highly effective and successful programs). *Appendix B: Overview of Selected Schools* includes summary information about these community Hebrew high school programs, which vary widely in terms of community size, program enrollment, and budget.

Finally, in response to numerous requests of JESNA's Center for Excellence in Congregational Education (CECE) for information about community Hebrew high schools, qualitative interviews were conducted with principals of five schools. These five schools also constitute a reputation-based sample. Leaders in the field identified these schools as successful in building and maintaining curriculum and programming. The purpose of these interviews was to solicit the principals' understanding of factors that enable their schools to recruit and retain students. The principals also shared their recruitment and promotional materials, as well as course catalogues and parent/student handbooks.

The five high schools included in the CECE report are located in California and on the East Coast. The schools included are: Jewish Community High School of Gratz College in Philadelphia, Hebrew College's Prozdor Hebrew High School in Boston, Los Angeles Hebrew High School, Midrasha in Berkeley, and Yachad (Greater Hartford Jewish Community High School). One community high school in its planning stages was also included: Yachad: The Sacramento Jewish Community High

¹⁰ Wertheimer, *Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today*, 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹² This school is no longer in operation.

¹³ Leora Isaacs, *Delaware Gratz High School: Planning for Future Growth and Excellence, Report on Consultation to the Jewish Federation of Greater Delaware* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2005), Lauren Raff, *San Diego High School of Jewish Studies Evaluation Study 2003–2004* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2004), Leora Isaacs, *Formative Evaluation of Formal Education Programs for Teens with Emphasis on the San Francisco High School Havurah, Report to the Teen Advisory Council of the Teen Initiative* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 1999), Leora Isaacs, *Review of Community-Wide Teen Programs: Kesher, the Judaica Institute & Israel Programs (with a Concentration on Gesher Hai), Report to the Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 1999), Wendy Rosov, *Formative Evaluation of the Peninsula Havurah High* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2001).

School Program. Findings emerged from empirically driven questions such as: What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses? What are the incentives and deterrents to enrollment and participation? What opportunities and obstacles are present within the community (or from outside the community)? Data from those case studies, which were gathered and analyzed by Dr. Shira Epstein, have informed this report. (*Appendix C: Profiles of Successful Community High School Programs* includes general information about these schools). In total, information from 26 community Hebrew high school programs are included in this report.

This report has also benefited from the direct contributions of leaders in the field. The input of members of the North American Association of Community Hebrew High Schools (NAACHHS) has been included. NAACHHS is the umbrella organization for the field of community-based supplementary Jewish education. The association was formed to advocate for its member schools. It creates, supports, and disseminates innovative programs, curricula, best practices, and resources to enrich Jewish education in member schools.

The community Hebrew high school programs in this report are as different as the communities they serve. Yet, commonalities emerged as key factors that enabled these schools to successfully attract and retain students. What was learned about community Hebrew high schools falls into four broad topics. The lessons are organized according to Joseph Schwab's four commonplaces of the educative episode.¹⁴ The first section, *The Learners*, includes lessons about students' motivations to attend and recruitment efforts. The section called *The Teachers* includes insights about effective teaching, qualifications, recruitment of faculty, and professional development. *The Subject Matter* section focuses on educational goals, curriculum, and the nexus of integrating informal and formal education, assessment, and impact. Finally, *The Milieu* section covers lessons about school culture and reputation as well as insights about effective modes of governance. Lessons learned from each section are summarized in *Conclusions and Recommendations*.

By synthesizing our findings about community Hebrew high school programs nationwide, this report offers insights that are grounded in the field. These lessons are offered as effective renditions to policy makers, educators, educational professionals, lay leaders, and parents. This is not to suggest that specific criteria essential for success have been defined, or even that a single model should necessarily be employed. In fact, the insights are purposefully drawn from schools that vary according to size, budget, geographic location, and models of governance. Despite these variations, clear mandates emerged. These insights are shared in an effort to advocate for effective practices based on empirical evidence.

This is not a comprehensive documentation or rating system of community Hebrew high schools. There are surely valuable lessons to be learned from the many other excellent community Hebrew high school programs that are not examined here. Also, this report does not touch upon every characteristic of community Hebrew high schools. Notably, two topics that were absent from the data (and are therefore not included in this report) are:

1. Technology as an educational and recruitment tool.
2. Financial constraints as an impediment to school improvement.



"In total, information from 26 community Hebrew high school programs are included in this report."

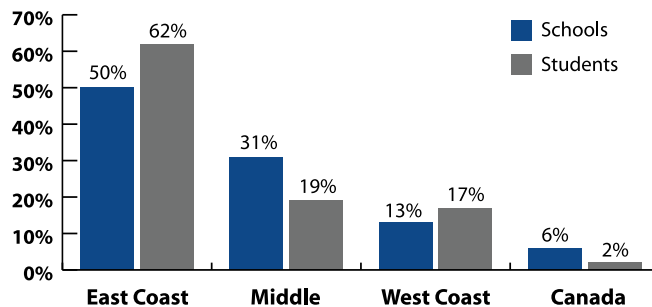
¹⁴ Joseph J. Schwab, "The Practical: Translation into Curriculum," *School Review* 81.4 (1973).

The focus of this report is on evaluative studies and preliminary research that were compiled by the Berman Center at the request of those communities. By combining these sources, this report offers the articulation of lessons learned to benefit leaders and educators who are invested in educating Jewish teens.

Overview of Jewish Community High Schools

There are almost 70 community Hebrew high schools in North America that are educating nearly 11,000 students, according to a survey undertaken by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Institute for Informal Jewish Education.¹⁵ Over \$14.1 million is annually spent to operate these schools. Half of the schools and more than 60% of students are located on the East Coast. The chart below illustrates the geographic distribution of community-based Hebrew high schools.¹⁶

Geographic Distribution



Almost 40% of community Hebrew high schools have been initiated since 1990.¹⁷ Few schools have dedicated facilities. Most are located within synagogues, while others are housed in academic institutions or Jewish Community Centers.¹⁸

The schools included in this report vary significantly in terms of size, budget, and organizational structure. Among the 26 schools, budgets range from \$60,000 to \$2 million. Tuition varies from \$200 to \$2,275 per student. Federations, contributions from synagogues, and central agencies for Jewish education also financially support community Hebrew high schools.

Schools serve geographically wide populations in different ways: programs are housed at central locations or operate at multiple branch locations. For example, a school in New England enrolls 110 students who are generally affiliated with four congregations. Another East Coast school serves approximately 1,000 students through academic programs at 13 branches. A third school in the West serves 400 students at two campuses.

The broad goals of the schools in this study are similar: to educate Jewish teens to be knowledgeable about the culture, traditions, and language of the Jewish people; to deepen the Jewish identity and commitment of students; and to foster an appreciation for lifelong Jewish learning and living. To reach those goals, schools favor a

¹⁵ Annette Koren, *Community-Based Hebrew High Schools 2005* (Institute for Informal Jewish Education and Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2005), 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

combination of traditional educational models and experiential learning opportunities. In doing so, many are working to make their programs less “school-like.”

The language employed by many schools exemplifies this trend: the title “program” is increasingly used instead of “school.” In some cases, the educational community is called a “community of learners” and the word “experiences” replaces “curriculum.” While envisioning an approach that is dynamic and engaging, leaders are also aware that their programs should not conflict with other youth-oriented initiatives in their communities. By working together with organizations that offer local youth programming, schools collaborate rather than compete for teens’ attention.

Aspects of community Hebrew high schools’ organizational structure resemble those of secular educational institutions. The majority of schools enroll students grades 8 through 12, though a few also include 7th grade students. Most schools operate on a two semester system, some run on an annual basis, and a few operate on a trimester system. Most schools are in session 8–9 months. The majority of students attend community Hebrew high school for fewer than four hours per week.¹⁹

Students have minimal requirements for enrollment. In each grade level, students have a small number of required core studies and a choice of elective courses. Many schools have different “tracks,” enabling students to choose a focus of study and determine when and how often they will attend.

Community Hebrew high schools have various approaches to governance. Most schools in this report maintain a board comprised of educational directors, representatives from synagogues, and parents. Others have a coordinator who works with various committees. Some schools incorporate input directly from students through student councils and teen advisory committees. A few schools operate under the auspices of a religious movement, but maintain enrollment that is open to the community at large and employ pluralistic curriculum. Most schools are inter-denominational or trans-denominational collaborations of synagogues, while others are non-denominational. Some schools are housed within large institutions, while others operate independently.

The Learners

- The majority of students who attend community Hebrew high schools are affiliated with Reform or Conservative synagogues. (Less than 10% of students at most schools are either unaffiliated or Orthodox.)²⁰
- Students are largely recruited from congregational and community-based supplemental schools. (The number of students recruited from day schools is not known.) Very few students in community Hebrew high schools have had no earlier Jewish education.²¹
- Drop out rates among students are high. Fewer than 60% of entry-level students at most community-based Hebrew high schools continue their education through to graduation.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

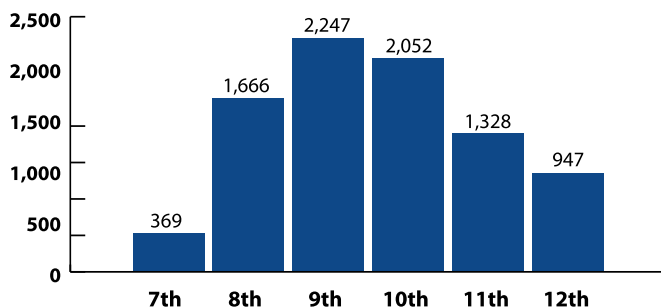
²⁰ Ibid., 17.

²¹ Ibid., 20.

²² Ibid., 20.

- Enrollment is highest among students in the 9th and 10th grades (see the chart below).²³ Students in these grades are largely engaged in pre-Confirmation studies. Decreasing enrollment in 11th and 12th grades results because many see Confirmation as an ending point for students' Jewish educational experience.

Total Enrollment by Grade



Motivations

In the multiple sources included in this report, teens, parents, and teachers were asked about students' primary motivations for attending community Hebrew high schools. Individuals in these three groups cited a variety of motivating factors: family influences (e.g. a sibling attended and/or parents feel that continuing Jewish education is important), positive peer pressure (e.g. to maintain contact with day school, middle school, and/or Israel trip friends), participation requirements for other programs (e.g. confirmation, youth group leadership and/or Israel experience trips), and personal values (e.g. desire for Jewish engagement and/or acknowledgement of the importance of Jewish education).

Many students said they attend for predominantly social reasons. Consequently, opportunities for student socialization are central at many schools. Extra-curricular programming that enables student interaction is also prioritized. For a number of parents, the social interactions and connections with teens from across movements and denominations in their community are primary goals for enrolling their children in school. One parent explained: "My goal for my daughter is to meet other Jewish youth outside of her existing clique." Parents at many schools stressed the value of the warm social environment the schools have created. One parent, a recent Soviet émigré said:

It's not serious learning. It's social. My son wants to be there. He wants to be Jewish. He came just this Sunday for his first daily service, and was very excited. Not about the subjects — but about the personality of the teachers.

The majority of students interviewed agreed that schools provide an excellent opportunity for social interaction among Jewish teens — both in terms of maintaining contact with old friends and making new connections. One student explained:

It is a good way of keeping up with friends...I met my boyfriend here.

Another said:

It's a great place to meet new friends. I meet people from public school here that I didn't know previously. Now I connect with them at school.

²³ Ibid., 15.

Many schools have created “Student Life” faculty positions. Schools hire engaging young staff to serve as positive role models, to design programs that expand learning beyond the classroom, and to create a youth community. In a number of cases, students reported that while they initially enrolled to see their friends or to please their parents, they continue to attend because they like the classes.

Culminating activities — such as Israel trips, confirmation, and graduation ceremonies — are important motivators for many students. One student explained that the product, rather than the learning process was most valuable:

If there were no Confirmation I wouldn't come.

The majority of community Hebrew high schools have graduation ceremonies. Additionally, 75% of the schools surveyed offer at least one external benefit such as college credit, high school credit, or community service credit.²⁴ “Kids want to get an honors certificate,” explained a teacher, “if only so that they can put it on their college application.” Indeed, many programs award certificates, diplomas, and foreign language credit.

Some community Hebrew high schools offer students the opportunity to earn a teaching certificate. With that credential, students can more easily obtain teaching positions and sometimes earn higher salaries as Hebrew school teachers once they graduate. Such teacher training programs are designed to prepare and support students to be teacher aids, madrichim (youth counselors), and religious school teachers while they attend college. These experiences have sparked some students’ interests in pursuing careers in Jewish education. The most effective programs of this sort are linked to supervised field placements and many have internship components.

Factors that motivate students at some schools proved to be less salient at others. For example, a motivating factor for many at one school is the opportunity to gain high school foreign language credit. Approximately one-third of all open-ended responses to “reasons for attending community Hebrew high school” referenced Hebrew language credit. In another community, opportunities for college credit courses and language credits were readily available elsewhere, so the chance to receive Hebrew language credit was less enticing.

Community Hebrew high schools benefit from awareness of educational and extra-curricular opportunities that exist in the community at large. In several schools, college credit had once motivated students to attend, but at the time of the evaluations that was no longer the case. Students’ needs change over time, so continued awareness of students’ motivations to attend community Hebrew high schools should be an on-going process.

Teens, parents, and teachers agreed that many teens do not attend community Hebrew high school due to lack of interest. Other reasons include lack of time, conflicting activities, friends not attending, schoolwork, and lack of parental encouragement. With a large percentage of parents working outside the home, scheduling conflicts and geographic distance also emerged as major obstacles (or were at least common excuses) for not enrolling. According to many respondents, parents welcome a reprieve from

²⁴ Ibid., 21.

Hebrew school carpooling after their children become bar/bat mitzvah. Teens' negative attitudes toward Jewish education are coupled with their parents' lack of investment.

Across communities, many respondents asserted that the number of parents and students who desire and are willing to pursue a rigorous academic curriculum is extremely limited. Both parents and students reported difficulty prioritizing attendance. Teens tended to be very busy, and experience significant pressures from school and other obligations. Many students feel over-programmed and overburdened with school, extracurricular, and social commitments.

Students conjectured that their friends drop out when they feel they are "not learning anything," and participation is "a waste of time." Some parents expressed their hesitancy to "force the issue" with their teens. Others said that their children have higher priority commitments. Significantly, cost of tuition was not raised as a factor for recruitment or retention of students.



"Recruitment efforts present a real challenge to community Hebrew high schools."

A key element of one school's ability to attract students was its flexibility regarding students' time commitments. The school allows students to choose courses to fit their unique needs. In designing their own schedules, students can choose from a multitude of course electives. Students who experience challenges with course load and scheduling are asked, "What can we do to make this work for you?" The principal works to accommodate students' schedules when there are conflicts with outside activities. While most students meet the graduation requirement of four hours per week, the school also enrolls students who wish to study only two hours per week. Students who complete six hours of study per week graduate "with honors."

Recruitment

Recruitment efforts present a real challenge to community Hebrew high schools. Most schools consider personal contact and word of mouth to be their most successful recruitment channels. Schools also use: synagogue bulletins, post-bar/bat mitzvah synagogue mailing lists, local Jewish newspapers, congregation/community/day school staff, youth group mailings, secular media outlets, and JCC bulletins.²⁵ Despite these multiple methods, recruitment efforts generally lack comprehensive organization, and are rarely coordinated. Few schools have accurate records of enrollment, making follow-up with individual teens and their families virtually impossible.

Many schools have adopted multi-pronged efforts toward publicizing. Some schools have created opportunities to showcase and recognize students as members of the school community. They encourage high school students to present themselves as role models and "ambassadors" in their local congregations and communities. Students are acknowledged with articles in the local Jewish press, and through culminating ceremonies and services at local congregations. Identifying Hebrew school madrichim (youth counselors) as students from the community Hebrew high schools also enhances a school's visibility. Empowering high school students to develop community programs is also effective. In one community for example, teens created a program where they read Hebrew children's stories at local bookstores.

²⁵ Ibid., 18.

Many schools recruit students from “feeder” congregations through open houses, direct mailings, and meetings with parents. In some cases, efforts also include peer-to-peer outreach, encouragement by rabbis and directors, and individual outreach to non-affiliated families.

Successful recruitment of students was in many cases dependent upon the ability of the principal or director to collaborate with area rabbis. Strong collaborative ties between the director, area rabbis, and educators helps to ensure a program’s appeal to diverse populations. Working together, they ensure that a program is appropriate for students from varying denominations and backgrounds. Also, such collaboration creates a community culture and expectation of participation in a community Hebrew high school program.

Professionals and lay leaders across studies understood the need for a culture that supports continuing Jewish education for teens. The predominant local culture, many asserted, views a child’s bar/bat mitzvah as the culmination of their Jewish education. The lack of expectation for teens to continue with Jewish education is a primary obstacle to enrollment. This underscores the need for rabbis, parents, and educational professionals to advocate for continuing education.

Reaching out to non-affiliated families is highly valued among the schools studied. One principal spoke of “casting a wide net” in recruiting by accommodating students with diverse needs and interests. Though members in that community expressed concerns about divisiveness that might stem from students’ religious differences, the principal asserted that such “issues” proved to be adults’ rather than students’ concerns. Effective interdenominational schools actively cultivate a culture of respect for differing perspectives.

The Teachers

- Most community Hebrew high schools have an approximate student to staff ratio of 1 to 9. In addition to teachers, schools also employ art specialists, music specialists, informal educators, and family educators.²⁶
- Educators are largely employed part-time: at most schools, staff members teach less than six hours per week. Staff tenure at most schools lasts less than six years.²⁷
- Approximately 25% of educators in community Hebrew high schools have more than eight years of teaching experience.²⁸
- A small percentage of schools have hired marketing and recruitment specialists. About 15% of staff members have some or solely administrative responsibilities.²⁹

Effective Teaching

According to students, parents, and even the instructors themselves, satisfaction with a community Hebrew high school depends primarily on the quality of the teachers.

²⁶ Ibid., 22.

²⁷ Ibid., 23.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Many respondents further asserted that the quality of the faculty is particularly important on the teen level, where participation is totally discretionary. As one respondent stated: “For this age level, the quality of the teacher and how they engage students is essential.” The most effective teachers combine the pedagogic skills specific to teaching teens with their knowledge of subject matter. Exemplary teachers also model respect for diversity of belief and practice.

Parents, students, and teachers all have strong ideas about what qualities comprise “good” teaching in community Hebrew high school settings. They stressed the need to combine relevance, structure, and content, with ample opportunities for student involvement. They also recognized the importance of variation and diversity in teaching methods, and modes of presentation. In the schools surveyed, teachers use a range of pedagogical strategies and learning activities to engage teens. Many take advantage of current technologies including music, film, and the arts. They employ strategies like independent research and group projects. Effective teachers recognized teen learners’ overwhelming preference for experiential learning and opportunities to apply their skills.

Both teens and parents appreciated teachers’ use of multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory experiential approaches. Students preferred courses where varied instructional techniques are utilized. Throughout the evaluations, they responded most favorably to experiential learning opportunities. In particular, they favored simulations, field trips, debates, role-playing, incorporation of the arts, and social action opportunities. One student offered this description:

I like discussion classes. Debating is good. The teacher leads the discussion and introduces the content, but mostly students are talking and reacting and analyzing. The class trip to the mikvah was better. We were more involved. It was better than class where they just lecture and expect you to take notes or take it all in. It's just them talking at you, and maybe answering questions.... The good ones integrate Judaism with everyday life.



“Students are eager to understand why these lessons should matter to them.”

Many students expressed a desire for teachers to “make the archaic texts more relevant to [their] lives.” Students are eager to understand why these lessons should matter to them. The principal of one school explained that prospective teachers must demonstrate their ability to engage students in non-lecture style, text-based learning that enables students to make personal meaning of the text.

Students asserted that many teachers are “cool” and engaging. Respondents explained that the most engaging teachers tend to be younger. Others said that outlook, rather than age is a key factor. Students claimed that they generally do not remain in courses with teachers who are perceived to be “boring.” In most schools, there is general consensus about preferred instructors. These teachers have good rapport with teens, broad and deep knowledge of their subject matter, and are dynamic and creative teachers. Students asserted that they are also aware of which teachers are less engaging.

An evaluation of two 9th grade core classes provides an empirical example of student dissatisfaction: In one class, the teacher was unable to engage the students; teens seemed bored, lethargic, distracted, and not at all connected to the material.

Repeated failed attempts on the part of the teacher to “bring the text to life” were met with students’ disinterest and even explicit skepticism about the relevancy of the material to their lives.

In another core class the teacher (who was a seasoned and competent educator with prior connections to many of the students), enjoyed more success in terms of student involvement. While the teacher was able to engage the students, the evaluator contended that the lesson lacked content depth. During an elective observed by the principle evaluator, it became evident that the teacher was overly invested in making sure students had fun. The evaluator concluded that little actual teaching or learning took place.

Successful engagement of teens requires subject matter knowledge, awareness of adolescent development, an ability to relate to teens, and familiarity with a variety of informal techniques to engage students. Faculty members in the schools evaluated possess these skills in varying degrees. There was general agreement among respondents that the quality of instruction varied greatly from teacher to teacher and from class to class. Many teen respondents complained that teaching methods are not engaging or geared to their needs. Adult respondents said that teachers care about students, and are highly committed to both the school and to the Jewish education of teens.

Qualifications

Across programs, faculty members’ educational backgrounds differed substantially. At some schools, teachers are professionals in the community who are part-time educators in addition to their work as doctors, lawyers, or business people. Other schools purposefully hire young teachers, for their abilities to relate to teenagers. Still other schools favor teachers who hold master’s degrees or even doctorates in Jewish studies and Jewish education. Many hire teachers who are in the process of pursuing rabbinic ordination, and some have a regular practice of hiring alumni of the program.

Teens and adults generally had differing opinions about the abilities and qualifications of the faculty. Respondents from most schools described substantial variation among the members of the teaching staff regarding their ability to effectively teach teens. A small number of respondents in each evaluation expressed opinions at both extremes: some said the faculty is comprised of highly qualified teachers, while others claimed there are few qualified teachers on the faculty. Most asserted that faculty members have differing abilities to teach, engage students, and serve as role models. According to parents, some faculty members “have complete command of the subject matter,” while others “are unprepared and present incorrect information.”

One parent asserted:

The rabbis are really knowledgeable and very dedicated, but they have so many other things that they have to do. Also, many are not trained as teachers, so while they have the subject-matter knowledge, they do not always know the best ways to bring it out to students — and especially teenagers.

A student asserted:

The classes are great — on paper — but only with certain teachers. I really associate the classes with the teachers. The teacher must know the subject material. It really takes away if they are only one lesson ahead.

Another said:

The effective classes are the ones where the rabbis are teaching. Kids are more behaved. The rabbis are particularly interesting, especially in the confirmation class I am in. Some teachers do not have a set plan, so the kids act out and the discipline goes down and it is a waste of time.

Students expressed frustration about feeling as though they are “not learning” or “wasting their time.” Some of those interviewed blamed ineffective teaching or teachers’ lack of classroom management; others attributed the problem to inattentive and disruptive students.



“At the majority of schools, the most effective method to recruit teachers is through word of mouth.”

Both parents and students interviewed agreed that courses varied greatly in quality and substance depending on teachers’ pedagogical abilities and depth of content knowledge. One responded explained: “half of the courses are very high quality, even college level and the others are very weak.” Several students commented that the courses “sound more interesting than they are.” A student explained:

The courses are basic and repetitive. Most classes don’t interest me. But the classes with [a particular teacher] balance it out. So there are things for in-depth learners and those who don’t know. People are thinking and processing, but in certain areas are not taking it seriously. It depends partly on the attitude of the teacher and what they expect and demand.

At one school, members of the administration said that in every course, teachers draw upon substantive content including Jewish texts. Yet at that school, students complained that teachers’ approaches were “touchy-feely” and too focused on “discussions of feelings.” This discrepancy punctuates the saliency of a teacher’s role in the learning experience. Despite leaders’ supervision of course materials, teachers’ approach overshadowed the content.

Faculty Recruitment

At the majority of schools, the most effective method to recruit teachers is through word of mouth. Schools also use congregational bulletins and listservs, Jewish media outlets, college and university placement offices, and central agency placement services.³⁰ Educational professionals explained that recruitment efforts are limited by geographic and financial constraints. The school director and board members at one school asserted that recruitment difficulties are primarily related to the low pay scale of the school. At another school, the principal maintained that she is able to attract a wide range of charismatic and knowledgeable faculty who appeal to different types of students. In fact, she no longer advertises for teachers and relies solely on “word of mouth” recruitment. Approximately one-third of her faculty members are alumni of the program.

³⁰ Ibid., 25.

Schools with positive reputations among leaders in the field tended to select and engage faculty based on a combination of content and pedagogic knowledge. An alumnus cautioned: “Be careful at choosing teachers with not only experience in Judaism, but experience in working with high-schoolers.” To maintain a cross-denominational educational community, one school employs teachers from across the religious spectrum (i.e. Conservative, Chabad, Reform). Another school employs many teachers who are rabbinical students from the Reform and Conservative movements. Schools benefit when faculty members represent a range of religious and educational backgrounds reflecting the diversity of the community.

School leaders differ about their preferences regarding full- or part-time staff members. Some maintain a hiring preference for engaging a fewer number of full-time educators (for whom teaching is one of many responsibilities), rather than a larger number of part-time teachers. This practice is based on their experience of part-time teachers as more transient, while full-time staff tends to have more tenacity. This strategy fosters a sense of collegiality and professionalism among the staff. Additionally, with longer rates of tenure, full-time educators are more likely to engage in professional development.

Other schools favor the hiring of part-time teachers. Students benefit from part-time teachers’ ability to focus on specialized content areas and the opportunity to learn from diverse role models. Faculty members appreciate increased scheduling flexibility. In either case, the salary scale and benefits for teachers should be on par with the scale for comparable programs in the community (i.e. other community Hebrew high schools).

Professional Development

It was widely agreed that professional development is a *sine qua non* of any effective educational program, and particularly for those involving teens. Every teacher at one school is trained and supervised by the Hebrew program coordinator, Judaic Studies coordinator, or principal. Supervisors observe teachers on a regular basis, and conduct in-service learning programs.

Unfortunately, professional development, supervision, and guidance regarding content and pedagogic techniques were limited at most schools. According to faculty members at several schools, there is insufficient support, guidance, and supervision for faculty. This is particularly true for part-time teachers, who have limited contact time with students.

Both full- and part-time teachers can benefit from professional development workshops and seminars targeted particularly for community Hebrew high school teachers. Ideally, this would be a condition of employment; in addition to teaching responsibilities, faculty could be contracted for curriculum development, professional development, and co-curricular activities. Peer mentoring and clinical supervision might also supplement these programs. The entire school community benefits from teachers’ participation in ongoing professional development, mentoring, and supervisory activities provided or supported by the school.

The Subject Matter

- Community Hebrew high schools offer many areas of Jewish learning as both electives and required courses, including: history, Israel, ethics, Tanach, Talmud, culture, theology, holocaust, philosophy, and Hebrew language.³¹
- The curriculum at most schools is heavily weighted toward elective courses. The most popular electives are: Jewish cooking and film. Other electives include: art, Israel, sex, ethics, dance/music, Hebrew, teen issues, and humor.³²
- Jewish history is the most commonly required subject. Though Hebrew language is the least commonly required subject, it is one of the most commonly offered electives. More than half of community Hebrew high schools have no required courses.³³



“Though Hebrew language is the least commonly required subject, it is one of the most commonly offered electives.”

Educational Goals

Differing ideas about the curricular goals emerged among students, parents, lay leaders, rabbis, and educators at the schools evaluated. Ideas about characteristics of high quality Jewish education also varied significantly among those interviewed. In one evaluation, interviewees were asked to delineate what would comprise “excellent Jewish education for teens.” Some stakeholders felt that schools should prioritize experiential modes of learning and focus on informal programming. They asserted that in addition to academics, schools should be a communal resource and programming entity for teens. They suggested that schools sponsor extracurricular activities and partner with other teen programs.

Others deemed rigorous academic standards as most important. Those interviewed felt that community Hebrew high schools should provide serious, academic settings for teens to continue their Jewish education. An identifiable tension emerged from the evaluations between those who prioritized rigorous academic standards and those who placed a higher value on meaningful socio-cultural experiences. A third group challenged the notion of experiential learning and academic rigor as mutually exclusive. They maintained that a beneficial program would focus on the needs, interests, and capabilities of individual students, and provide a range of learning opportunities.

The schools evaluated have multiple goals including: providing a place for serious Jewish education, integrating formal and informal programming for Jewish teens, and creating a Jewish youth community that encourages socializing among Jewish teens.

Courses offered to accomplish these goals include: ethics, modern Jewish history, Rabbinics, Israel, prayer, Hebrew language, literature, arts and culture, Israeli dancing, Bible, community service, and leadership training. Courses vary greatly with regard to structure, definition, depth, and breadth. Additionally, schools offer co-curricular activities such as retreats, local and national field trips, travel to Israel, and mentoring and internship opportunities. Confirmation classes and courses that engage students in the study of “original Jewish sources,” were generally described as the most intellectually stimulating offerings across the schools examined.

³¹ Ibid., 11.

³² Ibid., 25.

³³ Ibid., 12.

At one community Hebrew high school, the majority of parents, students, and teachers interviewed agreed that the school is not a forum for “serious” or “very intensive” Jewish learning. Some students expressed disappointment about this, while a minority simply disagreed. While some students and parents said they want programs to be more “intellectually stimulating,” most are satisfied with students’ level of exposure to Jewish topics and perspectives. Students asserted that they can get what they want from the programs. One explained:

A lot depends on the individual. One can make it as intense as one wants by choice of courses and specific teachers. But it is good that no one feels pressured. Most students screw around. It all depends on how much work one is willing to put forth. A lot of classes are a happy medium. The teacher usually goes with the flow. She lets teens learn what we want to learn.

A teacher lamented the difference between her goals and the desires of her students:

My goal is to provide an introduction to Jewish tradition that is incredibly deep...thinking about religion from an adult point of view...existential issues in a sophisticated way, but the [community Hebrew high school] is more social. I want a learning environment that leaves them with a positive feeling. What the kids say they want puts us in a bind. It leads to dissatisfaction.

Teachers in some schools lamented the fact that no real curriculum exists. Instead, courses are “a haphazard assortment” based on teachers’ interests and areas of expertise. Many respondents suggested that the goals of the program should be articulated more clearly, and an overall curriculum outline should be developed to reflect these goals. Courses consistent with these goals should be designed and offered. There should be careful attention to developmental appropriateness and what teens are likely to perceive as relevant. A parent offered this suggestion:

Maybe they should develop a straightforward program, so they build to a conclusion. It is much more of a potpourri — no one knows where they are heading. There are no curricular goals.

At schools with positive reputations among educational professionals, the educational approach is aligned with the schools’ mission, vision, and goals. The distinctive needs and characteristics of the community are taken into account, and developmentally appropriate, content-rich curricular materials are provided for teens. Key factors in determining an educational approach include defining community priorities regarding: connection of teens to their home congregations, fostering a sense of community and pluralism across institutions, engaging students from unaffiliated families, convening a critical mass of students in order to provide high quality programs and/or specific courses/interest areas, providing leadership development for older students, and engaging a knowledgeable and well-trained faculty.

To design an effective educational approach, Berman Center evaluators recommend that school leaders review and analyze exemplary programs that can inform a model for the community that is aligned with a school’s vision, mission, and goals. Lay and professional leaders should share the draft model with each rabbi and school director in the community. It is essential to gain their active support and buy-in, and to promote understanding of the potential benefits for their constituents and for the

community. In addition, professionals and lay leaders should seek to address the concerns of the “feeder” schools and congregations.

Curriculum

Teens’ experiences at community Hebrew high school are, in most cases, their first form of “voluntary” Jewish education. Many schools allow students to choose from varied course offerings, alongside required core courses. Schools aim to accommodate teens with different interests by offering a variety of courses. At one school, course offerings are scheduled in a manner that obliges students to balance text-based courses during the first period with other types of electives during the second period. Most students appreciate this flexibility, while others want opportunities to elect a more challenging program and receive appropriate recognition. Students benefit from freedom to design their own program of study. Parents generally agreed that offering choices and a variety of courses is critical to the success of the program, although some felt that there should be greater recognition of “serious” studies. A parent asserted:

There should be greater diversity of kinds of courses and encouragement for taking the more serious ones....cooking and film are fine, and we can't denigrate that. But there is too little respect for quality and the hunger of the kids who are looking for these kinds of things.



“Students benefited from freedom to design their own program of study.”

Teens want to feel that the time they devote to these programs is worthwhile. Respondents indicated that the quality of the courses and curriculum is important to them. Yet, there was agreement among respondents that many schools’ curriculum is highly uneven with regard to content and rigor, development, and implementation.

Perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the existing curriculum varied in the evaluations. In many cases, respondents held diametrically opposed views on the same topics and issues. These perspectives varied across and between constituencies. In one evaluation for example, many of the adults who were interviewed felt that the range of courses was impressive and appealing. Students felt that despite the variety of courses listed, their choices were limited by curriculum requirements. Some viewed the wide variety of courses as a disadvantage, since courses were frequently non-viable due to lack of enrollment. Careful construction of the curriculum sometimes necessitates fewer classes, allowing for more robust enrollment in each class. The diversity of subjects should realistically correspond with enrollment capacities, so that courses offered will not have to be cancelled.

Most respondents were unclear about the rationale behind the scope and sequence of courses. The logic underlying the specific requirements was not apparent to many. Some parents and students felt that requirements were “outdated,” while others felt that the very notion of requirements was obsolete. In the reputable schools, the education professionals create a written course of study and course curricula that is developmentally appropriate, logically ordered and clearly articulated.

At most schools, the range of courses offered allows students to choose more or less intellectually challenging courses. Students choose both the subjects they study and how much effort they invest. In some cases, highly motivated students, parents, and faculty members expressed a desire for more traditional text-oriented offerings. This

group wants to imbue courses with as much substance as possible. They also favor developing mechanisms to motivate and recognize students for selecting more challenging options and for investing substantial effort in the program.

Exemplary schools offer opportunities for students who wish to pursue a more rigorous course of study through mechanisms such as: an academic track, an arrangement with a local college, or through online courses. Mentoring projects and assignments that extend and deepen the learning in the courses are also offered. Data supports the recommendation that schools should offer students the ability to opt for one or more such advanced options based on their desire and ability.

The Nexus of Formal and Informal Education³⁴

Experiential learning emerged from the evaluations as an integral aspect of the community Hebrew high school experience. Students thrive when they combine learning in and outside of the classroom. They appreciate opportunities to “learn by doing.” A student, whose comments were representative, said:

The courses I learned most from were the ones where we could apply what we learned — even through debates and group projects. It is boring when the teacher just reads from his notes or when what we learn doesn't pertain to my life.

Both students and parents feel positively about curriculum that integrates formal and informal educational opportunities, which is for many the primary value of a community Hebrew high school program.

The schools included in this report offer an array of formal and informal educational opportunities that aim to expose students to the variety and richness of Jewish life. Schools offer numerous co-curricular activities: community events, holiday celebrations, family education, retreats, Israel trips, Shabbatonim, study trips, youth groups, and dances.³⁵ Some schools focus on college preparation with Jewish college fairs and exploratory college trips for juniors. Some incorporate a community service component into their programs and some offer co-curricular field trips. At many schools, retreats constitute the primary approach to informal programming. In addition to retreats, another approach to incorporating more informal programming is through all-school assemblies. Many parents described the importance of learning about Jewish values while volunteering. A parent explained:

Otherwise, she could just do her service hours through school, but here she puts it in the context of Jewish values.

In addition to co-curricular programming, schools integrate informal learning into the classroom. Most students said they prefer and learn most effectively from courses that combine content and experiential learning. Many expressed a desire for more arts oriented course. Others suggested integrating Jewish cooking and other types of cultural opportunities along side more academically oriented learning opportunities.

One community Hebrew high school has significantly modified and revitalized its own program and curriculum in recent years, making it more flexible, relevant, and engaging to its student population. It has intensified its emphasis on student life,

³⁴ The terms “informal” and “experiential learning” are used in this report in accordance with Dr. Joseph Reimer’s definition. He writes: “some informal educators prefer to call their work ‘experiential education’ to stress that it is the *experience* of Jewish living that powerfully educates participants to the richness of Jewish identity. Whichever name one prefers, the important point is that creating powerful experiences for participants is as serious and complex an educational task as teaching in a classroom.” (“Frequently Asked Questions About Informal Jewish Education,” Institute for Informal Jewish Education memo, September 2003).

³⁵ Koren, 13.

experiential education, and the integration of service learning and social justice. Emphasis has shifted from focusing on conferring “credit,” to achieving curricular goals and impact on students. The overwhelming majority of students, parents, and faculty at another school agreed that through the successful integration of informal and formal programming, their community Hebrew high school provides an excellent opportunity for social interaction for Jewish teens.

The evaluations showed that co-curricular activities (including trips, retreats, on-site programs and special events, and social justice activities) are an integral part of a school program and are most effective when integrated with course learning. The scope and sequence of effective curriculum is logical and clearly articulated. Curriculum and course content is aligned with the school’s mission and vision at schools with positive reputations.

Assessment

In some schools, clearly stating academic expectations and requirements proved to be essential. One principal asserted that the school’s greatest selling point is its emphasis on high academic expectations, because students recognize that their time is “well-spent, respected, and valued.” Some schools have grading and attendance procedures in place, where absences and honors are noted. School leaders asserted that some students need concrete, measurable rewards such as graded tests or papers as motivations for dedicated study.

In many cases, evaluative practices also provide structure for teachers who feel it enhances the learning process. Teachers generally agreed that grading and attendance is beneficial. Many asserted that the absence of such policies diminishes the school as a teaching and learning environment, and fosters related discipline issues. One teacher explained:

It is difficult — impossible — to accomplish anything when kids show up only half the time. It’s just unacceptable. There needs to be an attendance policy.

Clearly stating academic expectations and requirements is essential. At many of the schools evaluated, realistic rules and policies for attendance, participation, codes of behavior, and achievement were developed, communicated, and consistently enforced.

Some schools employ a grading system, while others use the pass/fail method of assessment. Most of the Jewish supplementary high schools examined generally offer no formal assessment of student achievement (other than to meet the Confirmation requirements of particular congregations). As a result, proof of learning or educational impact is limited to anecdotal evidence. According to the adults and teens interviewed, student achievement and learning is highly individualized, and depends on the motivation and effort of each student.

Impact

Across schools, there is widespread agreement that students who expend the effort can receive a high quality Jewish education. More than 70% of the students from one school (who were surveyed at the year-end), responded that they learned new things. Opinions about the extent of students’ learning varied according to population. In many schools, teachers offered anecdotal evidence of student learning. For example:



“Across schools, there is widespread agreement that students who expend the effort can receive a high quality Jewish education.”

A good indicator is when kids are responding to what the teacher is saying. Not to an open-ended question, but a more fact-based question, like “what does this word mean?” I think they learn quite a lot because at the beginning of the year I give them an objective test with specific questions, and I give it again towards the end of the year and I measure what they’ve learned.

Despite teachers’ evidence, some parents and older students (particularly 10th–12th graders) at some schools expressed doubt about the value and depth of the learning experience. One parent offered this comment:

Although it is not serious learning, my son comes home and we have discussions...

Other parents asserted that learning is taking place, even when the students do not acknowledge it. A parent said:

My son found some courses very interesting, and I feel that he is learning. Of course, he may not express that or feel that way. But every once in a while he says something that he could only have picked up at [his community Hebrew high school].

Students too, expressed differing opinions about how much they are learning. For example, one student who attends Jewish day school said that her community Hebrew high school experience provides her with different and worthwhile Jewish learning opportunities. She explained:

I go to a Jewish school, so I learn about Judaism very seriously. But here I took a course on the Jewish way of dealing with people. It was a very good class.

Others indicated that they learn in some courses, but not others. One student remarked:

Mostly, you don’t learn.

Several education directors said they do not have sufficient information to judge the overall impact of the program on student learning. However, some asserted that students in teacher accreditation programs have substantial opportunities to apply what they learn. They noted that students are most enthusiastic about hands-on learning experiences. Some of the parents, rabbis, and educators focused on the impact of the programs on personal growth and Jewish identity. For some, community Hebrew high school provides students with opportunities to discuss relevant issues in a Jewish context.

Many respondents asserted students’ ability to apply what they learned at school to other arenas of their lives is an important indication of the efficacy of the learning experience. In this regard, the schools evaluated seem to be having an impact. Many students reported using what they learned. During focus groups, several students spoke generally about using lessons in their “thought and analysis of everyday life.” Others offered more specific examples. Students described incorporating their lessons from school into their family’s Seder, during their world history class, and at a friend’s house where the family speaks Hebrew. Several students commented that an opportunity to apply what they learned alerted them to the fact that they had been learning. A student explained:

In confirmation class we had to do a report on Bible stories. In some ways, they did not teach enough useful information. But I used it in youth group

— I reviewed it and built on it. It was great information to have for conversations, debates...I had to use logic. You don't think it stays in your head. You usually don't think consciously of what your beliefs are, but it stays in your head. It becomes part of your mentality. I discuss religion a lot with two non-Jewish friends. They ask me to explain Jewish beliefs. I guess I did learn something in Hebrew high school.



“In schools that are part of larger organizations, more than half of school leaders have responsibilities beyond heading the school.”

Survey data further supports these qualitative findings. When asked to list “lessons learned,” students’ responses were diverse and far ranging, a testament to the wide array of course offerings. Interestingly, two of the top responses were “general life skills” and “other [comparative] religions.” This was consistent with focus group data, where many students spoke about the general impact of their learning.

The Milieu

- Professional leadership and governance structures contribute to school culture and reputation.
- Students’ perceptions about what makes a “cool school” are based on their impressions and interactions both inside and outside the classroom.
- The professional leader of a school needs: communication and management skills, the ability to implement the mission and vision, and the interpersonal skills and passion to engage and enthuse others.
- Most principals work 12 months per year, and earn less than \$55,000 annually. In schools that are part of larger organizations, more than half of school leaders have responsibilities beyond heading the school. Twenty-five percent are responsible for fundraising.³⁶

School Culture and Reputation

Widespread concern was expressed in the evaluations about the culture and image of community Hebrew high schools. The school environment emerged as critical to the effectiveness of programs, especially given the informal and voluntary nature of the educational experience. Setting a tone as a “cool school,” helps to facilitate an environment that emphasizes the importance of attendance and learning.

The presence of a highly effective educational leader, who is also an effective administrator and communicator, is key to shaping positive school culture. Optimally, the director should be a master teen educator who can mentor and supervise faculty and oversee curriculum development effectively. The educational leader should also support lay and professional stakeholders in developing and supporting the school mission. Unfortunately, retention of school leaders proved difficult in the schools studied: turnover of school leaders emerged as a major challenge. One school studied had three different directors in its first three years of operation.

³⁶ Ibid., 26, 27, & 34.

Co-curricular activities are also important to creating a positive school culture. Some schools hired engaging young staff to create programs with this goal. A designated staff person who can pay careful attention to the work of building and reinforcing school culture is a valuable resource. In some schools, this individual also serves as enrollment recruiter and communication officer for the program.

At one school, numerous interviewees lamented the poor reputation of the program and assigned responsibility to multiple sources. This was reflected in comments such as:

There is a sinking ship mentality...the community believes that it is not a high quality program, which creates a vicious cycle.

Members of the school's faculty, administration, and board attributed the low morale to lack of recognition and validation of the students. A number of respondents felt that students' lack of motivation or desire to attend resulted in a negative morale and bred disciplinary problems. A parent asserted:

[My child] says there is no critical mass to achieve a sense of accomplishment, belonging, and comradeship at the school. This is a big source of frustration for [my child] who spent many years in the school.

Despite such assertions, the school director and faculty members maintained that regardless of protestations, students are engaged and find the program enjoyable while they are there. As one teacher noted:

I get the feeling that by about 11th or 12th grade kids come to [this school] because they want to come, not because they are pushed into coming.

School culture is based on collective perceptions and is not necessarily a reflection of a school's educational efficacy. Transforming school culture requires a multi-pronged approach that facilitates communal buy-in and improves morale among teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Of course, an appropriate budget is necessary for increasing the visibility and positive reputation of a community Hebrew high school. A carefully designed and implemented public relations and communications plan should be articulated to enlist and enthuse community stakeholders. As part of this work, coordinated messages should be tailored for specific audiences.

Parents and students cited several examples of "mixed messages" regarding the culture and image of some of the schools evaluated. For example, several parents and older students expressed frustration because faculty members reinforce the notion that students are "doing time to achieve credit." At one school, a number of parents expressed discomfort with a statement by school representatives at a recruitment meeting. At that gathering, parents were told that many students feel that "the break is the best part." Parents felt that assertion undermines the learning environment.

Parents and lay leaders at another community Hebrew high school indicated that school is perceived as a place where serious Jewish learning takes place. The majority of those interviewed asserted that strong academics is the school's strongest attribute. A lay leader commented: "I think we have succeeded in creating a place where kids can explore some really compelling issues, it's good for kids who are intellectually interested."

A stated goal of one school was the cultivation of a “teen community created through social interaction, leadership opportunities, and the development of new friendships.” Through the evaluation process, it became clear that many components of that goal are being successfully met. Parents and students agreed that teens are motivated to attend in order to socialize with their friends.

During participant observation, the evaluator witnessed the strong culture of social interactions. Before class and during the break, students actively mingled in the common spaces, eating snacks, and listening to music. Survey data showed that these informal interactions were indicative of more substantive relationship building. In response to the question, “Have you made any friends at [school]?” two-thirds of the respondents checked “yes.” Yet there was also evidence to the contrary. Several parents with multiple school-age teens explained that their older children dropped out because their friends stopped coming. Rabbis and educators shared their concerns about the tenacity of denominational stereotypes and barriers, suggesting that many teens remain solely in the social circles they developed within the context of their synagogue’s religious schools and youth groups.



“Parents and students agreed that teens are motivated to attend in order to socialize with their friends.”

Governance

The importance of effective governance by professional and volunteer leadership emerged as key to creating a positive school culture. The board of governors is most effective when it is representative of the community as a whole, and has strong relationships with the other stakeholder institutions in the community (such as schools, synagogues, federation, and JCCs). School directors at one school worked collaboratively with area rabbis to shape a program that is appealing and appropriate for students from varying denominations and backgrounds. In many schools, volunteers (including parents) are organized to provide backing and support for the program and to assist with marketing and fundraising. Gathering professional and volunteer leadership is a means to cultivate community ownership.

Without full parental and communal support, programs evaluated were affected in a number of ways. Some were unable to provide sufficient financial support for faculty salaries. Others had inadequate administrative and marketing staff. Still others had inadequate physical space.

A committee, which acts as a representative democracy, governs one school. Despite the potential for complicated inter-organization dynamics, the key stakeholders surveyed agreed that governing the school as a community-wide endeavor offers significant added value to creating a Jewish educational scene. The group is comprised of lay leaders and professionals from the participating congregations, professional staff from the Bureau of Jewish Education, and community members. Engaging in governance using this model sometimes resulted in problems of parity. While in theory, the composition of the committee is a representative democracy, in practice the adequate representation of each constituency at meetings proves challenging. The potential for communications problems is also rife.

Another's schools governing body is a board with representation by federation leadership that included a number of key community leaders. This board plays an active role in the school's policy-making, advocacy, and financial resource development. Despite the genuine enthusiasm of the board, this type of governance proves challenging because board members are often eager to champion ideas, but were less available to act.

Based on lessons learned from evaluations, Berman Center research associates recommended to one school that the governing body undertake a process to clearly articulate the mission and goals of the community educational program for teens. Ideally, a "strategic visioning committee," would be convened, made up of stakeholders who are: top-level federation lay and professional leaders, lay and professional leaders of "feeder" congregations and schools, parents, and lay and professional leaders of the community high school. These individuals should be recruited based on their skills as strong advocates for a community-based program and their ability to commit to and provide appropriate levels of financial support. They would support the mission and goals of the community program and actively encourage participation by their constituent groups.

The representatives on the "Strategic Visioning Committee" should draft a unique vision regarding school's goals and objectives, as well as the mission of the institution. Such a mission might incorporate: providing meaningful and engaging Jewish learning experiences for teens, being part of a continuum of learning that provides seamless connections from Jewish early childhood education through the high school years (and encouraging connection to Jewish community), incorporating Jewish knowledge and values in students' daily lives, fostering identification with and support of Israel, strengthening positive Jewish identity, developing understanding and respect for the diversity of the Jewish community, and developing Jewish literacy. In creating the mission statement, careful attention should be paid to the character and composition of the community and to the potential student body.

Committee members' should take the draft vision, mission, and goals back to their constituencies to gain their endorsement and promise of active support — as well as input for any necessary revisions. They should also engage in discussions about potential program models to achieve the vision, mission, and goals. Communities should take time to develop consensus about mission and goals, and to foster a sense of community ownership of the program. After appropriate revisions, the governing body must formally adopt the vision, mission, and goals. The newly articulated vision, mission, and goals should be widely disseminated in the community through a variety of promotional formats. A careful communication and dissemination plan must be created and implemented.

The "governors" of the program, in collaboration with the professional leaders, should create policies to ensure that the mission and vision for the program can be achieved. They should be willing and able to use their leadership positions in the community to advocate for financial and human resources, and fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities to the program. The governing body is charged with ensuring that the course of study is aligned with the school's vision, mission, and goals.



"Communities should take time to develop consensus about mission and goals, and to foster a sense of community ownership of the program."

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Learners

- Students have a variety of motivations for attending community Hebrew high schools including: family influences, positive peer pressure, participation requirements for other programs, and personal values.
- The recruitment of students should be well coordinated and take a multi-pronged approach, with full support from the governing body and key stakeholders.
- Strong collaborative ties between the school director, area rabbis, and educators helps to ensure a program's appeal to diverse populations.

The Teachers

- Teachers' successful engagement of teens requires subject matter knowledge, awareness of adolescent development, an ability to relate to teens, and familiarity with a variety of informal techniques to engage students.
- Faculty needs training, mentoring, and supervision to ensure that teaching strategies and learning activities reflect the goals and mission of the school.
- Exemplary faculty members utilize a full-range of teaching strategies and learning activities, responding to individual learning needs and styles.
- In addition to teaching responsibilities, faculty should be contracted (and paid appropriately) for curriculum development, professional development, co-curricular activities.
- The salary scale and benefits for teachers should be on par with the scale for comparable programs in the community.

The Subject Matter

- Co-curricular activities including trips, retreats, on-site programs, special events, and social justice activities are integral to community Hebrew high schools. These activities should be integrated with course learning.
- Schools should offer opportunities for students who wish to pursue a more rigorous course of study. Students should have the ability to opt for one or more such "advanced" classes based on their desire and ability.
- Students thrive when learning in and outside of the classroom. They appreciate opportunities to "learn by doing," and tend to respond to course content that is relevant to their lives.
- Realistic rules and policies for attendance, participation, codes of behavior, and achievement should be developed, communicated, and consistently enforced.
- Flexibility should be built into the system to accommodate the realities of teen life.

The Milieu

- Careful attention should be paid to building and reinforcing a positive school culture. A designated staff person should be engaged for this purpose. This individual can also serve as enrollment recruiter and communications/public relations officer for the program.
- A governing board, including key federation and congregational leaders, as well as representatives of the parent body, should: be strong advocates for the community-based program, support the mission and goals of the community program, commit to and provide appropriate levels of financial support, and actively encourage participation by their constituent groups.
- Together, the board and education professionals should: articulate a clear educational vision; guide lay and professional stakeholders in developing and supporting the school mission; supervise and provide professional development to faculty to enhance instructional effectiveness; and ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the school's vision, mission, and goals.

Appendix A: About the Evaluations

This report draws upon lesson from the evaluations of five community Hebrew high schools conducted between 1999 and 2005: Delaware Gratz High School, San Diego High School of Jewish Studies, San Francisco High School Havurah,³⁷ The Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches' community-wide programs for teens, and the Peninsula Havurah High School.³⁸ The main goals and methodological approaches of each evaluation, as well as background information about each of these schools, are discussed on the following pages.

³⁷ This school is no longer in operation.

³⁸ Leora Isaacs, *Delaware Gratz High School: Planning for Future Growth and Excellence, Report on Consultation to the Jewish Federation of Greater Delaware* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2005), Lauren Raff, *San Diego High School of Jewish Studies Evaluation Study 2003–2004* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2004), Leora Isaacs, *Formative Evaluation of Formal Education Programs for Teens with Emphasis on the San Francisco High School Havurah, Report to the Teen Advisory Council of the Teen Initiative* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 1999), Leora Isaacs, *Review of Community-Wide Teen Programs: Keshet, the Judaica Institute & Israel Programs (with a Concentration on Gesher Hai), Report to the Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 1999), Wendy Rosov, *Formative Evaluation of the Peninsula Havurah High* (JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America, 2001).

San Francisco High School Havurah was established in 1996–1997 as a collaboration of Congregations Beth Sholom, Emanu-El and Sherith Israel, the Bureau of Jewish Education, and The Jewish Community Federation. Prior to 1996–1997, any formal Jewish education programs for post-bar/bat mitzvah teens in the greater San Francisco area was provided by individual congregations. These programs were predominantly pre-Confirmation 9th and 10th grades; virtually no 11th or 12th graders continued their Jewish education.

It was anticipated that a unified community program would attract highly qualified faculty (including clergy from the collaborating congregations), which would result in higher quality educational offerings than might be provided by each of the congregations independently. Organizers also recognized the added benefit of bringing together large numbers of Jewish teens from throughout the area to learn, socialize, and interact together, thereby creating a youth community.

The evaluation focused primarily on the San Francisco High School Havurah, based on the assumption that the program is sufficiently well established and robust to benefit from evaluative scrutiny at the end of its third year of operation. The review of the San Francisco High School Havurah was part of the overall evaluation of the San Francisco Teen Initiative. Consistent with the goals of the overall evaluation, it was designed to assess: how well the program delivers its services (including program quality, administration, participation, etc.), the extent to which the program is achieving its stated goals, the effects of the program on its participants (and on others), and what might be needed to improve the program or to achieve its underlying goals.

Data for this evaluation was gathered from multiple sources utilizing a variety of methodologies including: analysis of documentation and records (Havurah brochures, promotional and informational materials, internal reports, enrollment records); group and individual interviews with key informants (students, parents, teachers, administrators, rabbis, youth professionals). The director of the Havurah administered surveys to students. More than 45 individuals responded to the face-to-face and telephone interviews that were conducted by the principle evaluator. Additionally, the principle evaluator observed a number of classes and a special presentation during one evening at the San Francisco Havurah. As the data was collected and analyzed, findings were used to inform decisions and to guide mid-course corrections to the program.

The Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches conducts three major community-wide programs for teens: *Kesher*, a weekly Jewish education program for eighth graders; *The Judaica Institute* (JI), a weekly Hebrew high school program for 9th through 12th graders; and *Gesher Hai*, a six-week educational teen Israel Experience. There were 82 students enrolled in Kesher in 1998–1999, representing approximately 46% of the total potential population of Jewish 8th graders, or at least those who completed 7th grade in either congregational or day schools. Enrollment had increased from 80 in 1997–1998, and there was strong impressionistic and anecdotal

evidence that students are satisfied with and enjoy the program. Thus, it was unexpected that 40 students did not enroll in The Judaica Institute in 1998–1999, after what seemed to be a positive Keshet experience in 1997–1998. There were 165 students enrolled in The Judaica Institute in 1998, representing approximately 10% of the total potential population of Jewish 9th through 12th graders in the community. Twenty-two students registered for the Geshet Hai teen Israel experience for summer 1999. It was estimated that 12% of all teens in the community participate in at least one educational Israel Experience during their high school years. The community mounts vigorous recruitment efforts through its Israel Program Center and provides substantial financial assistance to teens who wish to participate in this and/or other Israel programs. Post-trip follow-up is provided through the Israel Alumni Council (IAC), which meets during JI sessions.

It is the goal of the Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches to offer the highest quality programs possible and to involve the largest number of teens possible. For this reason, the Commission engaged the Berman Center to gather information about the current teen programs. The goal of the study was to provide feedback about the current programs to decision-makers, planners, and implementers in order to provide a better understanding of how the programs are perceived and received in the community, and to provide a basis for recommendations regarding possible mechanisms for improvement.

JESNA's Director of Research and Evaluation conducted a series of semi-structured group and individual interviews with key informants including teens who: were enrolled in Keshet and JI; had been enrolled in Keshet and JI in the past, but dropped out; were never enrolled in the programs; participated in Geshet Hai in previous years; were registered for Geshet Hai 1999; or were registered for Geshet Hai 1999, but dropped out. Parents were interviewed whose teen was: enrolled in Keshet and JI; had been enrolled in Keshet and JI in the past, but dropped out; was never enrolled in the programs; participated in Geshet Hai in previous years; registered for Geshet Hai 1999; or registered for Geshet Hai 1999, but dropped out. Additionally, Keshet and JI administrators and faculty and staff of The Israel Program Center were interviewed.

Group interviews were over one hour in duration; individual interviews ranged from 15–45 minutes. Teen program staff from the Commission for Jewish Education compiled lists of possible key informants, scheduled the sessions, and invited and encouraged participation in the interviews. There was considerable effort to include a broad range of constituents, and to ensure that diverse viewpoints would be represented. Most interviews were conducted while the evaluator was on-site in West Palm Beach, with follow-up calls conducted from JESNA offices in New York to reach individuals who were not initially available. A total of 63 individuals were interviewed in face-to-face group and individual interviews and by telephone.

Peninsula Havurah High (PHH) was conceived during the 1997–1998 school year, just as the San Francisco High School Havurah was beginning its

second year of operation. The PHH was organized to serve the needs of the Peninsula Jewish community, particularly the Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Los Altos, and Redwood City regions. The Peninsula Havurah High opened its doors in Fall 1998. A collaboration of Congregation Beth Am, Congregation Kol Emeth, Temple Beth Jacob, Congregation Etz Chayim (which joined in 1999) and the Bureau of Jewish Education, students at the Havurah High represent synagogues from the Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative movements as well as a small number of unaffiliated families. According to the Havurah Handbook 2000–2001 the PHH is “open to all Jewish high school students in 9th through 12th grades. Students do not need to be members of a congregation or have previous religious school experience in order to attend.”

The PHH meets one night per week from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Congregation Beth Am. Students can arrive as early as 6 pm, and are greeted with a school-provided snack. Each weekday session is divided into two class periods of about 40 minutes with a 20-minute break in between. During the 2000–2001 academic year, first hour classes were devoted to core curricula for each grade, while the second hour class was based on an elective system.

The PHH also offers two “enrichment” programs. Any PHH student may receive a full year of high school foreign language credit by participating in the Beit Midrash Hebrew-for-Credit program. This program meets for two hours on a different weeknight at Kol Emeth and for the second hour (the “elective” hour) during the regular weekday meeting time of the Havurah. 11th and 12th grade students can opt to participate in the Jewish Civics Initiative (JCI) program. This national program based in Washington, DC, includes a one semester course on Jewish civics, a three- to four-day Washington experience, and a service-learning component upon return. Students who choose to participate in JCI or in the Beit Midrash Hebrew-for-Credit program are required to pay additional fees on top of PHH tuition.

The review of the Peninsula Havurah High was part of the overall and ongoing evaluation of the Teen Initiative. Consistent with the goals of the overall evaluation of the Teen Initiative, it was designed to assess: how well the program delivers its services (including program quality, administration, and participation), the extent to which the program is achieving its stated goals, the effects of the program on its participants (and on others), and what might be needed to improve the program or to achieve its underlying goals.

The main thrust of the study was formative and the approach to identifying specific research questions and key informants were collaborative. With the guidance of the Director of the Teen Initiative, the PHH site committee developed an initial list of questions for exploration. Additional questions came from the PHH director and the Director of the Teen Initiative. All questions were then further refined, categorized, and prioritized with the guidance of Berman Center staff. Interview protocols and focus group guides focused on more global research questions such as: has the Havurah created a culture of serious Jewish learning for teens? How successfully does the Havurah integrate formal and informal programming? What is the value

added of having a community-wide Jewish supplementary high school? What, if any, drawbacks/compromises are there? Is the governance and administrative structure of the Havurah appropriate to the needs of the program?

Data for this evaluation was gathered from multiple sources utilizing a variety of methodologies including: analysis of documentation and records (Havurah brochures, promotional and informational materials, internal reports and memoranda, enrollment records); focus groups were conducted with students, parents, and teachers by the principle evaluator. The principle evaluator conducted individual interviews with a variety of key informants and community stakeholders. Student surveys were administered and analyzed, and on-site observations were conducted by the principle evaluator.

San Diego High School of Jewish Studies is a supplementary, interdenominational community high school providing Jewish education to 8th through 12th graders. Synagogue membership is not a pre-requisite for enrollment. As of May 2004, a total of 241 students attended one of two campuses: North County — San Diego Jewish Academy (170 students) and East County — Temple Emanuel (71 students). The staff was comprised of 23 teachers, a principal, a Hebrew language coordinator, and administrative assistants. Curriculum focuses on Judaics and Hebrew language for credit.

JESNA was engaged to work with staff to collaboratively develop evaluation goals and set criteria, and partner in the data collection process. This approach was meant to create community through the process and build the school's capacity for self-evaluation. The evaluation focused on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and recruitment and retention of students. Both current and former students completed surveys. Focus groups were facilitated with parents, teachers, and students who decided not to continue at the school. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who are community leaders/decision makers, rabbis, donors, parents, and former students.

Delaware Gratz Hebrew High School aims to provide excellent Jewish education for post-bar/bat mitzvah teens in the community, and to engage the highest possible percentage of teens in Jewish educational programs. Founded in 1965, Delaware Gratz works to provide an environment for students to explore their Jewish heritage, strengthen their identity, make friends, and develop a sense of responsibility for the Jewish people and the state of Israel through informal service learning and formal academic opportunities. The school offers a variety of programs on Jewish topics for students in grades 7–12 in an inter-denominational social setting. Students can earn various certificates for service learning certificate, youth leadership, and teaching. Courses for college credit are also available.

As a corollary to the over-arching desire for excellence and high levels of participation in teen Jewish education, community leaders became concerned that considerably fewer than 10% of the community's teens were enrolled in the community's post-bar/bat mitzvah program and enrollment was declining.

As part of a strategic planning process, the federation engaged JESNA's Berman Center to serve as consultants to help the community achieve its goal of providing high quality Jewish education that would engage a high proportion of the community's teens.

Through a series of meetings and conference calls facilitated by Berman Center staff, community professionals and volunteer leaders agreed that their planning process needed to be informed by data about:

1. Current perceptions about the post-bar/bat mitzvah educational program provided by the community (i.e., the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges characterizing Delaware Gratz High School).
2. Promising practices, models, and strategies from other community Hebrew high programs in North America.

This data would enable community leaders to better understand community assets and needs, and to be aware of possibilities and potential new directions. With this information and understanding, community leaders could develop and implement a realistic plan and process to ensure future growth and excellence of Jewish education for post-bar/bat mitzvah teens in Delaware.

A qualitative design, employing group and individual interviews, was selected as the methodology for gathering data to answer the framing questions about the community's educational program for teens. This methodology permitted gathering in-depth information from a wide range of community stakeholders and key informants in a relatively brief period of time.

Berman Center staff worked with community volunteer and professional leaders to develop a list of categories of "key informants." These included individuals from within and outside the school community. Delaware Federation staff organized and scheduled group and individual interviews with each of the key informant groups. Students and parents were randomly selected for participation in group interviews.

All Delaware Gratz High School faculty members were invited to participate in a group interview. The Delaware Gratz High School Director was interviewed individually, as were the representatives of the partner/feeder institutions and the federation. Berman Center staff conducted all of the interviews, with the exception of one group interview with students from Einstein Day School, who were potential 2005–2006 enrollees at Delaware Gratz.

All group interviews took place at the JCC in Wilmington. When possible, individual interviews were also conducted on the JCC premises. The remainder of the interviews were conducted by telephone. Berman Center staff coded and analyzed all responses, which were reported anonymously and/or in the aggregate.

Appendix B: Overview of Selected Schools

- Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies
- Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County Adat Noar/Talit Programs
- CAJE Community High School of Jewish Studies
- Florence Melton Communiteen Mini-High School
- Harry Elkin Midrasha, Community High School of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Rhode Island (BJERI)
- Hebrew College's Prozdor Hebrew High School
- Jewish Community High School of Gratz College
- Judaica High School
- Kulanu: Benson Zinbarg Jewish Education for Teens
- Los Angeles Hebrew High School
- MAKOM: The Hebrew High School of Greater New Haven
- Midrasha in Berkeley
- Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor High School
- Tichon Atlanta
- Tucson High School for Jewish Studies
- Yachad (Greater Hartford Jewish Community High School)
- Yachad: The Sacramento Jewish Community High School Program

Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies

ID Information:	Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies 940 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601 Tel: (201) 488-0834 • Fax: (201) 488-2126 • Website: www.bchsjs.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Over 300 students for the 2005–2006 school year
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school strives to create a vibrant and warm community of Jewish teens who are engaged in Jewish study and are socially connected to one another. • It aims to deepen the Jewish identity and Jewish commitment of its students and to instill the values of <i>klal Yisrael</i> (Jewish pluralism), <i>tikkun olam</i> (repairing the world), <i>derech eretz</i> (respect for others), and <i>ahavat Yisrael</i> (love of Israel). • Students have the opportunity to choose courses that have been developed by the administration, many of the 22 teachers, or are brought in from other institutions. • Students receive syllabi, finals, and report cards.
Meeting Times:	Sunday mornings, from 9:15 am to 12:30 pm
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters of 15 weeks each
Daily School Schedule:	Three classes per day
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most classes are offered either to 8th to 9th graders or to 10th to 12th graders. • 9th graders may take some upper grade classes. • Juniors and seniors may elect to take particular classes for college credit. • All classes are electives, and are categorized by the following six subject areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History and Sociology — selected class offerings include: God, Judaism, and Rock and Roll; A History of Israel; Holocaust; Judaism and Islam; Special Events That Shook the Jewish World; and The Israel Highway. 2. Bible — selected class offerings include: The Bible as Literature, Exploring a Book of the Bible, Insights into the Weekly Torah Portion, and Women in the Bible. 3. Language, Prayer, and Ritual — selected class offerings include: From Birth to Death as a Jew, Hebrew Ulpan (various levels), The Jewish Calendar, Kashrut, and Prayer: Is Anybody Listening? 4. Philosophy and Ethics — selected class offerings include: Ask the Rabbi, Be the Judge, Holy Brother, Jewish Ethics and Halacha, and Questions in Jewish Philosophy. 5. Literature and Rabbinic Literature — selected class offerings include: Creative Jewish Writing Workshop, The Haggadah, Jewish Play Reading, Literature of the Holocaust, Pirkei Avot, and various Mishna classes. 6. Arts — selected class offerings include: The BCHSJS Choir, Israeli Dance (various levels), Judaic Needlework, and Jewish Infused Improvisation. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not make a distinction between formal and informal learning. It provides multiple entry points that can serve as educational opportunities. • Special learning opportunities include participation in the Panim el Panim program and in Students Teaching Students, where 11th and 12th graders

	<p>learn how to be an effective Jewish educator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the morning break, students are able to attend Student Council and Shabbaton Committee meetings. The school holds fall and spring Shabbatonim at the JCC of the Palisades, and runs a camp weekend in the late spring. While neither program is tied into the school curriculum, both programs have an educational theme, such as “Judaism and the Environment.” Youth group advisors staff Shabbatonim, which facilitates recruiting them as teachers as well. This helps to create a bridge between informal and formal educational programming for students. BCHSJS teachers also participate in Shabbatonim and camp weekends. Upper grade students have the option of taking a year-long course on Israel and participating in a Winter Israel Experience Trip. On this trip, students present tzedakah which was collected by all the students in the BCHSJS to a different designated Israeli institution each year. The students become involved in community programming, such as volunteering for Super Sunday, working on various projects in the community on Mitzvah Day, visiting the school’s partner group care facility and supportive apartments, bringing in food for Tomchei Shabbos, collecting toys for Gifts for Chanukah, and assembling personal care kits for the homeless.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>22 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty members have high credentials and come from various educational and professional backgrounds. A guidance counselor provides students who exhibit learning and/or physical disabilities or social/emotional problems with support and accommodations to assist their successful learning at BCHSJS.
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCHSJS is an independent institution that is sponsored by 25 area congregations and by UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey. While the majority of students are from Conservative congregations, students also come from Orthodox and Reconstructionist congregations. The area Reform congregations have their own Hebrew High program (Bergen Academy of Reform Judaism), although some students from these congregations choose to study at BCHSJS. In addition, the school attracts non-affiliated students. New By-Laws, accepted in the spring of 2006, allow for a Board comprised of individuals in the community who seek to further Jewish education on the secondary level.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$474,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>BCHSJS receives most of its funding from student tuition. It also conducts fundraising and receives an allocation from UJA Federation.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$855 tuition. Fees: \$75 registration fee; \$100 graduation fee for seniors only. There is a \$180 journal obligation per family. Students with siblings enrolled receive a credit of \$50. Students who belong to participating congregations receive \$115 towards tuition, which the congregation pays directly to the school.</p>

Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school recruits by sending letters to parents of prospective students, sending postcards to prospective students, conducting an “open school day” for prospective students and their parents, speaking to graduating 7th graders in sponsoring congregations, placing newspaper ads, and distributing posters. • The attrition rate during the year is low, and approximately 75–80% of students return each year.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s greatest challenge is finding appropriate meeting space. When BCHSJS began its operation 32 years ago, the Frisch School was suitable, as the day school never used its space on Sundays. There are now particular days during the year when BCHSJS must find alternate meeting spaces. • Meeting space changes have presented logistical difficulties, including drops in attendance on these days. • The school has conducted several exhaustive searches, and has not found a space that is both available and affordable. • Because of the school’s independent status (not fully funded by federation or congregations), it has faced challenges in offering competitive teacher salaries. The school recently increased tuition in order to raise salaries.
Contact:	Fred Nagler, Principal fnagler@bchsjs.org

Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County

Adat Noar/Talit Programs

Adat Noar ID Information:	Adat Noar c/o Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County 1 Federation Way, Irvine, CA 92603 Tel: (949) 435–3450 • Fax: (949) 435–3456 • Website: bjeoc.org/adatnoar/index.htm
Grades:	9th
Enrollment:	Approximately 150 students. All students must be affiliated with one of 18 area congregations in order to participate in this program.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adat Noar, the Bureau's flagship youth program, engages students in exploring and defining their Jewish identities. Through a combination of Sunday afternoon classes and weekend retreats, students experience the best that Judaism has to offer and form a true "community of youth." Adat Noar cites the following goals for its students: to meet and make friends among Jewish 9th graders from participating synagogues in Orange County and Long Beach; to share intensive Jewish learning experiences during the weekend retreats and preceding Sunday sessions; to explore concerns and issues that confront young people in today's complex world; to rediscover the joys and traditions of Judaism at enriching Shabbat programs and services after the bar/bat mitzvah years and at the start of the high school years; and to strengthen each student's Jewish identity, and provide opportunities to share experiences and socialize with other Jewish young people in a comfortable, informal setting.
Meeting Times:	Sundays, from 1:45 to 4:45 pm
Yearly School Calendar:	Each year constitutes ten Sundays at the Tarbut v'Torah Upper School Campus in Irvine, and five weekend retreats at the Brandeis-Bardin Institute.
Daily School Schedule:	Three hours per Sunday session
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students attend two Sunday sessions, which constitute a "minicourse" that revolves around a particular, pre-voted upon theme. They then attend a weekend retreat that allows them to delve more deeply into that theme. The five themes for 2006–2007 are as follows: American Jewish Teen; Shmirat Haguf: Guarding the Mind, Body, and Soul; Anti-Semitism: Bias and Hate; Discover Israel (note: this theme is taught every year); and Relationships. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the second session of each mini course. These sessions allow the parents to explore the theme as well. Sometimes they learn alongside their children within a session; at other points parents learn alone within a parallel session. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five weekend retreats at the Brandeis-Bardin Institute serve as a backbone to the program. Students participate in Shabbat rituals and t'fillot, and engage in activities that help them to further explore the chosen theme. For example, on a recent retreat that focused upon the theme of "Lifecycle," students participated in the elements of a mock Jewish wedding.

Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>Sunday Madrichim, 8; Adat Noar Sunday Program Director, 1; Assistant Youth Programs Coordinator, 1; Director of Youth Education, 1; Camp Cabin Staff, 12; Camp Social Worker, 1; Camp Rabbi in Residence, 1; Camp Song Leader, 1.</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>The majority of the madrichim for Sunday and camp are alumni of the programs. They have extensive hands-on training in discussion leading, informal education, team building, and creating community. They also have training specifically for the curriculum they are teaching/leading prior to each session. The Program Director is part-time and has a master's degree from Brandeis. The Director of Youth Education also has a master's degree.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<p>The program is under the auspices of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County, CA.</p>
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>Not available.</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>This program receives funding from the Federation of Orange County, as well as the Federation of Long Beach. The Bureau of Jewish Education underwrites close to \$700 per child. The family pays \$700 per child. The affiliated synagogue and the federations each pay \$295 per child. The school receives \$10,000 a year for student scholarships.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$700 early bird fee; \$750 full fee.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each spring, the BJE sponsors an "8th Grade Jewish Values Weekend" at the Brandeis-Bardin Institute, which serves as an introduction to the Adat Noar program. • During this weekend, 10 small groups explore an assigned theme for study, and at the end of the weekend, present a skit about their assigned theme to all participants. • These 10 themes are pre-determined potential themes for the following year's Adat Noar program. Students vote for the five themes that they wish to focus on in the upcoming year. • Each February and March the Bureau staff goes to each of the sponsoring congregations and meets with parents and 8th graders in a recruitment session. Program alumni for that synagogue also attend to share their experiences. • Brochures and applications are mailed to all eligible students entering 9th grade (approximately 350 this year). Follow-up postcards are also mailed, and all who attended a Bureau weekend in their 3rd to 8th grade years are called if they do not enroll. • About 98% of students who attend 8th Grade Values Weekend join Adat Noar. About 60% go on to TALIT in 10th grade. By the time they graduate in 12th grade, about 28% of the 8th grade class will still be with the school.
Challenges:	<p>Recruiting to non-sponsoring congregations and cost.</p>
Contact:	<p>Sheri Gropper, Youth Programs Coordinator sheri@bjeoc.org</p>

Talit (Teens are Leaders in Training) ID Information:

Talit c/o Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County
250 E. Baker, Suite B, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Tel: (714) 755-4000 • Website: www.bjeoc.org/talit

Grades:

10th through 12th

Enrollment:

Between 210–250 students from the Orange County/Long Beach area. Participants do not need to be affiliated with a synagogue in order to join.

Program Description/Goals:

- The goal of the program is to assist teenagers in gaining the skills to become a leader at school, in youth groups, as a camp counselor, or as a teacher's aide in their congregational schools.
- The program seeks to help over 200 Jewish 10th to 12th graders from Orange County and Long Beach develop critical leadership skills they can apply to school, sports teams, youth groups, extra curricular activities, and work.
- TALIT offers an imaginative curriculum encompassing new perspectives on one's role in Jewish life. It combines unique classroom learning with excellent hands-on experiences.
- Students hold stimulating discussions about Jewish ethics, history, leadership, and values.
- Developing personal relationships: The TALIT program is dedicated to deepening Jewish identity and students' connections to their peer community. Participants learn side-by-side in the classroom and work together as a team at camp; they socialize during dinners and create community on their camp weekend and at TALIT overnight.
- Relevant and exciting topics: Through self-exploration, dynamic discussions, and interactive activities students come face-to-face with the wisdom of our heritage in a unique way.
- Incredible hands-on experiences: Based on class attendance, participation, and overall leadership, students are invited to serve as junior counselors on 9th grade Adat Noar camp weekends in Simi Valley. Students who enroll in the Roslyn and Joseph Baim Advanced Camp Leadership program and who have consistent attendance for those sessions are invited to staff the 3rd through 8th grade Community Shabbaton weekends. Through Bureau volunteer opportunities, TALIT participants are able to accrue community service hours.

Meeting Times:

Sundays, from 5 to 8:30 pm

Yearly School Calendar:

TALIT participants engage in 11 Sunday classes, including one weekend at camp as a group and at least one weekend as a junior counselor in a cabin at camp for 3rd through 9th graders.

Daily School Schedule:

3.5 hours per day: First, there is a 15-minute welcome and announcements. Participants then break down by grade level for Leadership Sessions. This is followed by a 45-minute dinner. Participants then spend another hour in either semester-long mini-course electives or special programming.

Curricular Content:**Formal:**

- Core TALIT classes — called leadership sessions and divided by age group — examine leadership through a Jewish lens. Tenth graders explore and acquire basic Jewish leadership skills, 11th graders study Jewish leadership through Jewish ethics, and 12th graders process methods of implementing leadership skills in the "outside world."
- TALIT Electives are offered on a semester basis and cover engaging topics including: Biomedical Ethics; MTV: Media, Torah, and Values; The Conflict in Israel; Bibliodrama; Sex in the Texts; Judaism as a Brand Identity; Sinai to Cinema: A Movie Watcher's Ticket to God; Ethical Decision-Making; Women of Torah; The Ultimate Soap Opera: Violence, Sex, and Scandal in the Bible; Poetry and Parsha; Red, White, and Jew: Jewish American Dilemmas; Separation of Church and State.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can participate in Advanced Camp Leadership (ACL), seven two-hour sessions in which they further develop counseling skills. ACL is seven additional Sunday meetings. If students attend six out of the seven meetings, they are eligible to staff Community Shabbaton weekends. Participants who have completed a TALIT Staff Training mini course serve as junior counselors for Adat Noar retreats, by invitation. Community rabbis, educators, and leaders teach electives at TALIT. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TALIT participants take part in a November weekend, as well as a March overnight. All TALITniks on weekends earn 25 community service hours. Through the “Teens Take Action” Tikkun Olam (Social Action) club, Jewish high school students explore the Jewish obligation to help others. This monthly program earns its participants additional community service credits as well as the satisfaction of making a difference in the world. TALIT Gimel students have the opportunity to host Israeli teens through the Bureau Mifgash program. The Bureau offers a yearly “teen/parent” session for TALIT families. TALIT teens can choose to attend a yearly Bureau-sponsored trip to Washington, DC, to participate in Panim el Panim.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>Sunday Classroom Educators (Core Classes), 9; TALIT Electives, 20 per year; TALIT Sunday Director, 1; TALIT weekend cabin staff, 30; TALIT Weekend social worker, 1; TALIT Weekend Rabbi, 1; TALIT Weekend Songleader, 1; Director of Youth Education, 1; Assistant Youth Programs Coordinator, 1; Youth Programs Coordinator, 1.</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Staff includes a range of people from TALIT’s young alumni, ages 19–26, to community rabbis, educators, and leaders.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<p>The program is under the auspices of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Orange County, CA.</p>
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>Not available.</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Federation of Orange County and Federation of Long Beach, Bureau of Jewish Education private funding, student tuition, scholarships raised (about \$5,000 per year).</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>The registration fee for participants is \$475.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program is billed as a leadership training program, to avoid competition with synagogue and youth group programs. TALIT has built-in recruitment from Adat Noar. It also sends applications and brochures to all eligible students in Orange County (this year approximately 1,000). Peers telephone students who have been in a BJE program and are not enrolled in TALIT. Reminder postcards are sent to all students who enrolled in a BJE program in previous years and have not signed up for the current year.
Challenges:	<p>Attendance drop during the year and retention through to 12th grade.</p>
Contact:	<p>Sheri Gropper, Youth Programs Coordinator sheri@bjeoc.org</p>

CAJE Community High School of Jewish Studies

ID Information:	CAJE Community High School of Jewish Studies (Hebrew High) 300 South Dahlia Street, Suite 101, Denver, CO 80246 Tel: (303) 321-3191, ext. 214, 215, 216, 224 • Fax: (303) 321-5436 Website: www.caje-co.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 400–450 students at two campuses. • Open to all students in the metro Denver and Boulder area in grades 8–12, whether or not they are affiliated with a synagogue. • Students are from almost 60 public and private high schools, and 30 communities. • Approximately 20–30% of Denver-area Jewish high school students attend CAJE Hebrew High.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission of CAJE Hebrew High is to create an active learning community that is responsive to the needs of a diverse group of young Jewish adults. Students have the opportunity to grow in understanding, appreciation, and application of Jewish knowledge, practice, and values. This empowers them to be more informed Jews and solidify their Jewish identity. • CAJE Hebrew High is a community-wide program dedicated to the positive growth and development of Jewish teens who are knowledgeable about and committed to Jewish traditions and values. • CAJE Hebrew High offers a program of study that permits students both to explore traditional Jewish subjects and to experience innovative and creative courses of study. Their belief, which the school calls its enduring understanding, is that being an informed Jew in a secular world enables you to integrate Judaism into your everyday life. • Students come from a variety of backgrounds and represent a wide range of personal philosophies and levels of Jewish observance and knowledge. • Learning takes place in formal and informal settings, and students are encouraged to discover and define Judaism for themselves. • CAJE Hebrew High provides an opportunity for students, who may have few other contacts with other Jewish teens, to develop friendships with Jewish peers while exploring Jewish learning.
Meeting Times:	One night a week: Monday nights in Denver, and Wednesday nights in Boulder. Special interest tracks are offered on Thursday nights.
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters, each with 12 sessions
Daily School Schedule:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two classes per session on Monday and Wednesday. • One class on Thursday, including several Denver University classes offered through the Aleph Institute.
Curricular Content:	Formal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most classes do not require outside work. • Students receive grades at the end of each semester, and graduate with a diploma in Jewish studies. • Diplomas are granted to students who complete 16 courses, and some receive honors diplomas. A diploma with a concentration in one of the five areas of study is also offered. • Students who complete fewer than 16 courses receive certificates of participation.

- No college credit is offered.
- Students at the Boulder campus take a required grade-level course in their first period and an elective second period.
- Denver students choose from a series of grade-level courses for both class periods.
- Boulder required first-period classes — 8th grade, available only for students whose synagogues do not offer 8th grade programs) Life through a Jewish Lens; (9th grade) Tikkun Olam; (10th grade) Confirmation Studies (two-hour class); (11th grade) Israel at a Glance (required for all students in Fall; required for students registered for the Israel Study Tour in the Spring); (12th grade) Boulder Senior Seminar.
- Boulder second-period electives — class choices vary with the semester. Fall 2006 electives include: Art for Social Causes, Film Clips and Short Stories, Kosher Cooking Around the World, Art and Social Justice, Leadership, Jeopardy: A Jewish game show, Fabulous Jewish Women, Yoga and Meditation, and Poland and the Holocaust.
- Denver offerings — 8th grade: Good to Go: A hands on approach to Tikkun Olam. 9th through 12th grades: Politics Shmolitcs; Tastes of Judaism: Jewish Culture through Food; Sects Ed.; Kaballah and You; Israeli Dance; Shmooze and News; Art and Judaism; Sex, Drugs, and Integrity: Jewish Wisdom for the 21st Century Teenager; Conversational Hebrew; Israel at Glance (required for 11th graders); Relationships: What you Need to Know; Beyond this Life: What Jews Do and Believe about Death; Through a Jewish Lens; IDF: More than just an Army; Israeli Pop Culture; Israeli Issues and the Media; Singing is Believing: A Foundation for Faith; and Klez Garage Band.
- Special Interest Tracks (two-hour classes) on Thursday night — Song Leaders, other courses still being developed.

Informal/Co-Curricular:

- Eleventh grade students are encouraged to participate in the Colorado Israel Study Tour (IST). This program is a collaboration of CAJE, Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council, and the Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado. The six-week summer trip takes place in mid-June. About 40–50% of 11th graders go to Israel. About 90% of Denver teens who go on Israel programs go with CAJE.
- Ninth through 12th grade students may elect a two-week community service summer study tour in collaboration with American Jewish World Services.

Faculty:

Number:

45 over two campuses

Qualifications:

Varied, ranging from professional teachers and rabbis to community members just starting out as avocational teachers.

Auspices and Governance:

- CAJE Hebrew High is a program of the Colorado Agency for Jewish Education, which is a separate entity from the Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado.
- It is part of the CAJE Youth Programs Department, which also runs the summer Israel Study Tour and several smaller educational youth programs.

Budget:

Overall Budget:

\$262,000

Income Sources:

Participating synagogues contribute \$175/student to CAJE for the operation of the high school; a few synagogues pass this cost on directly back to the families. CHSJS receives an allocation from the general CAJE budget. In addition, the school receives a small allocation from the federation (it must apply for this allocation, as any agency would).

	<p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$800/year. There is also a \$125 graduation fee and a \$75 registration fee. A \$36 materials fee applies to art and cooking classes and to those classes requiring a textbook purchase.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No synagogues offer competing programs. • Two large Reform synagogues run their own programs through 10th grade, after which they encourage their students to attend Hebrew High, which grants these students two years of credit. • Some RMHA day school students attend (many do so because 11th grade attendance is required in order to participate in the IST program). • No students from the two yeshiva high schools attend. • The school director speaks with students in 8th grade (7th grade at schools that have no 8th grade; 10th grade at two large Reform synagogues). Information is also sent to religious school directors who forward mailing lists of prospective incoming students. • The school has a good balance of Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform students, as well as a few Traditional and left-wing Orthodox students. There are no right-wing Orthodox students (most go to Yeshiva high schools). • There are big enrollment drop-offs after 10th grade (confirmation) and 11th grade (IST).
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating both programs/course offerings and marketing materials to reach the maximum number of Jewish high school students: the school is constantly challenged to re-think what it does, the ways it does it, and how it gets the word out; so that more families know what is available through programs, and so that those programs develop to reflect needs of its constituents. • Finding the right balance between academic rigor and social benefits for students: many, if not most, students have both high academic expectations regarding their high school education/college aspirations and a full plate of additional extra-curricular activities. The school struggles with how to engage them in meaningful learning experiences without overwhelming them or turning them off. • Recruiting, retaining, and compensating committed and qualified faculty: it takes a special kind of educator to be effective in any situation, all the more so in a voluntary, supplemental setting. How does the school find these educators and provide useful ongoing professional development for them? • Funding: as the agency works toward an economic plan that relies less on the instability of grants and fundraising, it also has to keep in mind the challenges families face when it comes to tuition.
Contact:	<p>Stacy Wasserman, Denver Hebrew High Principal swasserman@caje-co.org (303) 321-3191 Ext. 215</p> <p>Jacqueline Sprinces Wong, Boulder Hebrew High Principal wecancook@aol.com 303) 321-3191 Ext. 221</p> <p>Roni Ogin, Youth Programs Administrator rogin@caje-co.org (303) 321-3191 Ext. 216</p> <p>Wendy Aronson, Youth Programs and B'nai Tzedek Manager waronson@caje-co.org (303) 321-3191 Ext. 224</p> <p>Risa J. Buckstein, Youth Programs Director rbuckstein@caje-co.org (303) 321-3191 Ext. 214</p>

Florence Melton Communiten Mini-High School

ID Information:	Florence Melton Communiten Mini-High School • Jewish Community Center 1125 College Avenue, Columbus, OH 43209 Tel: (614) 559-6279 • Website: www.columbusjcc.org
Grades:	9th through 12th
Enrollment:	25: most (approximately 75%) come from Conservative backgrounds; the remainder are Reform, with a few Orthodox. All belong to synagogues.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communiten Mini-High School in Columbus, OH, opened in 2003 as a microcosm in philosophy and structure of the successful Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools across the globe. Communiten shares the objectives of the Adult Mini-Schools to foster Jewish literacy and a desire for life-long Jewish learning in an intellectually stimulating, trans-denominational setting. The students form a learning community that transcends denominational or synagogue boundaries. • Communiten is a two-year school with over 100 hours of quality, dynamic Jewish learning. • The goals of Communiten program are to connect Jewish teens to their Jewish heritage in a relevant way, to launch ongoing explorations of faith, values, ethics, ritual, and history, and to stimulate students intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and socially. The fundamental principle is to integrate Jewish learning with Jewish living. • These goals underlie the curriculum. The curriculum provides Jewish teenagers with a framework with which to incorporate what they learn into their lives. • Through discussion and passionate debate grounded in Jewish texts, students explore topics and issues of relevance to them, such as sexuality, the environment, and business ethics. Communiten provides a welcoming atmosphere for difficult questions and the expression of a variety of opinions. Students are engaged both by topics important in their own lives and the ability to explore new or different beliefs. • The adaptable, relevant nature of the curriculum and the respect shown for the students' intellectual abilities distinguish this school from others.
Meeting Times:	Sundays from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Yearly School Calendar:	25 Sundays from September to May
Daily School Schedule:	Two 50-minute sessions with a social snack break in between
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communiten is a two-year school offering two full-year courses per year. Students may start in either year. • There is no homework or exams. Readings from a specially designed student reader are all done in class. An accompanying teacher's guide aids teachers in planning and conducting classes. • The curriculum was developed by professionals based upon research with Jewish high school students who were asked what they would like to see in the curriculum. Once written, the curriculum underwent a sequence of testing and revision. The primary concern was the impact it would have on teenagers. • Classes are centered on student participation in the form of questions, dialogues, and debates, and are responsive to the intellectual interests of the students. • The 2006-2007 classes are: The Big Ideas of Being Jewish, a text-based study of Torah that explores Jewish prayer and ritual in conjunction with issues in daily teenage lives (including tattoos, money, family, and crime); and The Facts, Faces, and Facets of Israel, a study of Israeli geography, history, culture, politics, and conflict and exploration of the importance of Israel to American Jews.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second year of classes contains a continuation of the study of The Big Ideas of Being Jewish and the class Voices in History, which explores the American Jewish experience through the voices of immigrants and modern American Jews. The most important aspect of the curriculum is the interaction between God, values, heritage, history, and the students' interests and daily lives. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a few special events each year, such as hearing a speaker on Jewish-Gentile relations or watching a performance of Fiddler on the Roof at the JCC.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>2</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Communiten employs teachers with experience and expertise in Jewish teenage education, requiring high levels of Jewish content knowledge. Communiten also only hires teachers with the ability to relate to teenagers, to respond positively to students' intellectual desires, and to lead thoughtful discussions.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communiten is run through the Columbus JCC. Most of the responsibility lies with the site director, who is aided by community volunteers and other JCC personnel. A national board of trustees oversees the implementation of the copyrighted curriculum and approves its use and modification at different sites.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>Not available.</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Initial start-up cost of over \$150,000 to develop curriculum from Florence Melton, the Columbus Jewish Foundation, and other site foundations. Funds for the local program come from the federation, fundraising, and student tuition.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$300 for JCC members; \$336 for non-members. There is a \$50 discount for early registration (before June 1st).</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communiten seeks to work with and around the demanding schedules of its students, acknowledging that students may miss classes for other activities. Even if students must miss half of the classes, the format of the curriculum still allows them to establish a meaningful connection to Jewish study and ideas. Communiten recruits by sending out brochures to approximately 300 local Jewish high school students and following up with personal calls. Personal recruitment is also done with participants in other JCC programs. Retention is not currently a concern. Thus far, all students have returned for the second year of the program, and a few have expressed interest in attending for a third year.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main challenge in establishing Communiten came from local congregational schools that operate their own high school programs. They felt that Communiten would take students away from their own programs, because despite the vast difference in the schools curriculum and structure, most teenagers have time constraints. Though no student attends both Communiten and their congregational school concurrently, most Communiten students remain involved in their congregations in other ways, such as youth groups. A current challenge is getting students "in the door." The director recruits heavily each August. Once students enroll, they greatly enjoy Communiten and attend as often as possible.
Contact:	<p>Shara Reiss, Director sreiss@columbusjcc.org (614) 559-6279</p>

Harry Elkin Midrasha, Community High School of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Rhode Island (BJERI)

ID Information:	Harry Elkin Midrasha of the BJERI 130 Sessions Street, Providence, RI 02906 Tel: (401) 331-0956 • Fax: (401) 274-7982 • Website: www.bjeri.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 180 students. The school serves students from Rhode Island, as well as Southeastern Massachusetts.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midrasha allows students to continue their Jewish education in a vibrant learning community while participating in specialized activities and trips. Students have the opportunity to learn with an outstanding group of educators, make new Jewish friends from around the state, and engage in a wide variety of educational experiences. Midrasha creates an environment wherein students can make new friends and have a great time while they learn and grow as individuals and as Jews. • Midrasha offers a broad menu of innovative classes in a variety of subject to appeal to many different types of students. Students are encouraged to select classes which they think will stimulate their intellect, teach them new skills, and fulfill Midrasha graduation requirements. • Students can also receive credit for independent study, community service, and travel to Israel. • Social interaction is another important feature of the program. • Students come from a diversity of religious backgrounds, with varying degrees of religious education and synagogue affiliation. • At Midrasha, students play a critical leadership role in organizing activities and setting school policy. They are encouraged to develop new class ideas and to work on the creation of curriculum and assist in the teaching of the material. Midrasha also offers classes in leadership development for those interested in youth group leadership, student leadership, and teaching. • All students receive transcripts at the conclusion of each semester that can be submitted to colleges.
Meeting Times:	Wednesday evenings in Warwick (first semester) or Cranston (second semester); Sunday mornings in Providence
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Five hours per week
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can choose the types of classes and number of hours they would like to attend. Each class period is 45 minutes long. Some classes meet for a full semester of 12 to 14 weeks; others meet for a "minimester" of 4 to 5 weeks. • Students have a choice of graduating with two degree options — <i>Bina Diploma</i>: In order to receive this 48-credit diploma, students must complete a minimum of two credits in each of the required subject areas; <i>Da'at Diploma</i>: In order to receive this 24-credit diploma, students must complete a minimum of one credit in each of the required subject areas. • The required subject areas are: Jewish History, Ethics/Thought, Arts and Culture, Literature, Community Service/Leadership, Rabbinics, Bible, and Hebrew Language. • Within the subject areas, a variety of courses are offered, such as: "Judges" (Bible subject area), "Inspiration and Creation" (Arts and Culture subject area), "Modern

	<p>Israeli Fiction" (Literature subject area), "Judaism and the Afterlife" (Ethics/Thought subject area), and "Youth Group Leadership" (CS and Leadership).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While students are able to choose from a variety of courses in order to meet the needed credits in the required subject areas, all students must take the following during their time at MIDRASHA: one semester of "Talmud" (Rabbinics subject area), one semester of "Question in Search of an Answer" (Ethics/Thought subject area), one semester of a course on Israel (Bible or History subject area), and one semester of "Comparative Religions" (Rabbinics subject area). Individual synagogues have the option of requiring certain classes in order for students to fulfill confirmation requirements. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIDRASHA offers several yearly opportunities to participate in special programming, including a three-day December trip to Philadelphia, participation in the Jewish Civics Initiative, and the opportunity to participate in March of the Living. MIDRASHA offers credit for participation in informal education. Students receive one credit for participating in each of the following activities: attendance at a Jewish camp, performance of community service, working as a tutor or teacher's aide, and traveling to Israel on an organized trip.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>33</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>MIDRASHA hires a broad range of faculty ranging from undergraduate students to clergy members. The qualifications of the faculty are knowledge of their subject and the ability to work well with teenagers.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIDRASHA operates under the auspices of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island. The BJE is housed in the same building as the federation, and the two agencies maintain a close relationship. Currently, six synagogues formally participate (four Conservative, one Reconstructionist, and one Reform). Some Reform synagogues that do not formally participate maintain their own high school programs, but many members of these synagogues attend MIDRASHA for their formal learning.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$100,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>The BJE does not contribute any money directly to the school, but the director's salary is part of the BJE budget. MIDRASHA has a fundraising target each year. This past year, it was \$4,000. It was raised primarily by selling ads in the graduation program. Each participating synagogue is required to contribute one unpaid teaching hour per week by a clergy person.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$605 full-time attendance (three or more credits), \$440 full-time "early bird" tuition (registration before September 3rd), \$555 part-time attendance (one or two credits), \$390 part-time "early bird" tuition (registration before September 3rd). Fees: All students pay a non-refundable \$50 registration fee. Students affiliated with participating synagogues receive a \$115 discount, which is paid by the synagogue. For families with multiple students in MIDRASHA, there is a \$55 discount for each additional enrollment beyond the first.</p>

Recruitment and Retention:

- The director visits all local synagogues to recruit students from congregational schools (all Rhode Island congregational schools end in 7th grade).
- The director also places ads in the local Jewish press, and direct mail is sent out to participating synagogue mailing lists.
- More than 85% of Rhode Island 8th grade day school graduates participate in the program.
- Most of the students who drop out of the program do so between 10th and 11th grades.

Challenges:

Expanding the school to more Reform students and increasing the number of participating synagogues.

Contact:

Shira Garber, Director of Teen Education and Israel Desk
sgarber@beri.org

Richard Walter, Assistant Executive Director for Education and Community Development
rwalter@bjeri.org

Hebrew College's Prozdor Hebrew High School

ID Information:	<p>Hebrew College's Prozdor Hebrew High School 160 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, MA 02459 Tel: (617) 559-8800 • Website: www.hebrewcollege.edu/prozdor</p>
Grades:	7th through 12th
Enrollment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 900. • Of those, approximately 800 study at the main campus on Sundays. Prozdor also offers midweek classes at "branch" locations. • The school serves 55 congregations in 60 towns. It is an interdenominational collaboration and unaffiliated students are also welcome. • Approximately 25% of students are day school graduates or former day school students.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prozdor strives to deepen the Jewish identity and Jewish commitment of its students. • The values of <i>klal Yisrael</i> (Jewish pluralism), <i>tikkun olam</i> (repairing the world) and <i>derech eretz</i> (respect for others) are an integral part of the Prozdor experience. Students graduate well prepared to fulfill the responsibility of <i>mi dor l'dor</i>, passing on the magnificent heritage of the Jewish people to the next generation. • Prozdor cites the following goals: to facilitate the development of student intellectual and spiritual life through the study of Torah, Israel, rabbinics, Jewish history, ethics, literature, and the Jewish arts in an open environment that encourages inquiry; to enable students to develop and expand their proficiency in the Hebrew language; to provide a variety of teaching methods to promote experiential learning and critical thinking; to provide a nurturing environment where students may develop mentoring relationships with their teachers; to foster meaningful peer relationships; to create an environment that encourages respect for divergent opinions, where students may learn about and honor diversity in Jewish life and embrace <i>klal Yisrael</i>; and to offer opportunities for social action and political activism, through which students learn to value participating in ethical <i>Mitzvot</i> and <i>Tikkun Olam</i> and to understand that Judaism obligates them to "make the world a better place." • The key element of Prozdor's success is the guiding philosophy of the school, which asserts that the school accepts all students and allows them to choose courses and programs that fit their unique needs. • In designing their schedule, students can choose from 75 course electives in addition to the core curriculum. • Students who experience challenges with course load and scheduling are asked, "What can we do to help you, to make this work for you?" The director and her administrative team work to accommodate the students' schedules when they have conflicts with outside activities, or if they miss classes due to illness. They also follow the progress of each student to insure their social comfort as well as their completion of the formal and informal learning requirements.
Meeting Times:	<p>Sunday mornings and/or weekdays. Students study at their area branch for two hours during the week, and join together at the main Prozdor Newton Centre campus on Sundays. (Prozdor currently houses the branch locations at Conservative congregations in Nashua, Lexington, Marblehead, Natick, Needham, and Worcester; at one Reform Temple in Sharon, MA; and at Hebrew College.)</p>
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	4 to 6 hours a week

Curricular Content:**Formal:**

- While most students meet the graduation requirement of four hours per week, the school does allow for students who wish to study only two hours per week at their congregational branch location (and receive only a congregational certificate). These students are included, by invitation, in all Prozdor informal group activities.
- Students completing six hours per week of study graduate “with honors.” Students enrolled in the six-hour program attend Hebrew College on Sunday mornings for four hours, and study at their local branch or Hebrew College during the week for two hours.
- Requirements include one hour of Core Class taught on Sunday mornings, and three electives. Hebrew Language is an elective; however, if a student takes Hebrew, it is for three hours weekly.
- Students enrolled in the four-hour program can choose between taking all four hours on Sunday mornings or dividing the time between two hours of Core Class Sunday study at Hebrew College and two hours of midweek study, either at a branch location or at Hebrew College.
- The following are Core Course Requirements: Grade 7: Tikkun Olam; Grade 8: Jewish History; Grade 9: Jewish Law; Grade 10: Israel; Grade 11: Jewish Civics; Grade 12: Post Graduate Seminar — Jewish Education and Leadership Training Seminar.
- Possible electives include: Israeli Dancing, Political Cartooning and the Middle East, Rabbinic View of Jewish History, History of World Religions, Pirke Avot, What does God Have to do with Social Action?, Stories of European Jewish Writers, Painting the Bible, Jewish Philosophy, Women in the Bible, The Jewish-American Experience in the 20th Century, The Chosen People: Chosen for What?!, Jewish Playwrights, The Jewish Creative Writing Experience, The Top 15 Jewish Dilemmas of All Time, Hebrew Literature, and Breishit: A Closer Look.
- The school also offers programming for students with special needs.
- Special Tracks: Students can elect to enroll in the six hour “Masoret” program, in which they will focus on Jewish text study in seminar style classes, and participate in several field trips.
- Students can also enroll in “Rimonim,” in which they will explore the arts on Wednesday evenings.
- A “Tochnit Talmud Torah” track, in which students study Talmud in chevruta, is available for those enrolled in the six-hour program.

Informal/Co-Curricular:

- The school meshes the formal and informal.
- The school’s full time staff includes two informal educators who coordinate the following: local class trips, an 11th grade trip to London, a senior trip to Israel, a school-wide trip to Eastern Europe, tzedakah projects (all students are expected to complete two projects within four years of study), and Israel education programs.
- While some informal on-site programming occurs on Sunday afternoons, informal education often occurs during the 30-minute “break time.” A benefit of this programming is that it aids in the fostering of community-building, which is essential in such a large school.
- Towards the beginning of the school year, 7th through 9th grade students participate in a grade-wide Shabbaton.
- Other options include: Kol Rinah Chorus, Nilhav Dance Troupe, Prozdor Klezmer Band, and a Drama Program.

Faculty:**Number:**

75 teachers; 7 FTE’s in administration; two office staff

	<p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Qualifications are varied; however, most of the school's faculty are Ph.D.'s or in the process of earning higher degrees. Many have Rabbinic ordination in various ideologies. All but the Hebrew faculty have master's degrees, and all have extensive experience working with teens.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	Prozdor operates under the auspices of Hebrew College.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>The school operates with an autonomous \$2 million budget.</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Tuition and fees from students. All trips and Shabbatonim are paid for by the families at a separate cost. Hebrew College covers all hidden costs, such as building maintenance, rent, marketing and promotion, etc.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$2,400 (The school is independent of congregational schools).</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruiting through area congregations and day schools: The school's assistant director actively recruits students each year. Appealing to a wide variety of students from diverse backgrounds: Prozdor has been successful in reaching out to non-affiliated families. While most affiliated students are from Conservative congregations, the school has been making inroads in attracting students from Reform congregations as well. Conservative supplementary schools: Prozdor widely recruits from all area Conservative synagogues. Reform supplementary schools: A few Reform synagogues allow Prozdor to recruit within their schools. Prozdor provides a Chinese buffet dinner during each evening presentation. Conservative, Reform, and Community day schools: A presentation is made in each area day school. Prozdor sponsors a pizza lunch on the day of the presentation, during which time Prozdor's assistant principal sits and talks with students who express interest in the program. Prozdor then follows up with phone calls and mailings. Many schools that have not agreed to in-school presentations have allowed Prozdor to send recruitment materials to their 7th grade mailing lists. Reconstructionist synagogues: Prozdor recruits students from the two area Reconstructionist synagogues. Creating a school culture: The principal points to a "cool" school culture as key to retaining students. Opportunities for socialization: Opportunity to socialize with hundreds of students reinforces the positive school culture. Opportunity for non-formal learning: Prozdor offers a variety of school-wide and grade-wide trips and Shabbatonim. In addition to the fall Shabbatonim, there is a NE College tour; winter fest; London trip; Eastern Europe trip; and a variety of Israel trips. In the 10th grade 25 students from the Alliance School are hosted by Prozdor students, and they travel to NY together. All trips are combined with serious learning as well as meeting peers in the different Jewish communities. Creating a culture of serious study: Prozdor labels itself as a serious study program, with report cards and homework. Because parents are paying \$2,400 in tuition, they are invested in the academic nature of the program. The attrition rate at Prozdor has risen slightly from last year's 5%, but it remains low.
Challenges:	The main challenge facing the program is finding adequate space. Prozdor has outgrown its Newton campus, and has been renting space off-site.
Contact:	<p>Marjorie Tarmy Berkowitz, Director</p> <p>mberkowitz@hebrewcollege.edu</p>

Jewish Community High School of Gratz College

ID Information:	Jewish Community High School of Gratz College Mandell Educational Campus 7605 Old York Road • Melrose Park, PA 19027 Tel: (215) 635–7300 Ext. 5 • Fax: (215) 635–7324 • Website: www.gratz.edu/JCHS
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Jewish Community High School serves over 900 students through academic programs at 13 branch locations in and around Philadelphia.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission of Jewish Community High School is to educate Jewish teens to be knowledgeable about the culture, traditions, and language of the Jewish people. • One of its goals is to develop in its students feelings of belonging, loyalty, and responsibility to the Jewish people, so that teens identify with the local Jewish community and the Jewish people globally. • The school provides affiliated and under-affiliated teens with formal and informal Jewish education programs in a trans-denominational setting. • Education is encouraged for personal enrichment and towards the pursuit of higher Jewish education, leading to positions in the Jewish community as future leaders, educators, and other Jewish professionals.
Meeting Times:	Students may attend academic classes one, two, or three days per week; most attend Sundays and one weeknight. Some students also participate in Service Learning programs on a bi-weekly or monthly basis under the auspices of its <i>Service Learning and Leadership Institute</i> .
Yearly School Calendar:	Classes are yearly; grading is per semester
Daily School Schedule:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday mornings: Four credit hours + optional minyan. • Evening classes: Three credit hours + optional dinner programs at some locations. Specific times vary by branch location.
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students choose classes based upon their targeted Diploma or Certificate program, each of which has particular course requirements. • Accumulating 92 credits earns students membership in Shalem Society, Jewish Community High School's highest credential. Members of the Shalem Society have gone above and beyond and have demonstrated very high levels of commitment to their Jewish learning. • Students can earn a Community Teaching Certificate, which can help them to obtain a teaching position and perhaps even gain a higher salary as a Hebrew school teacher upon graduation. The requirements include: twice-weekly attendance for all years of enrollment (80 credits over five years), fulfillment of Hebrew language and Judaica requirements, and completing a course in education during the final year. • Students who complete a five-year program of at least two days of study per week (70 credits overall) are eligible for a Diploma in Jewish Studies. • The accumulation of 30–69 credits earns students the Jewish Community High School Certificate of Merit, signifying completion of Judaic studies at Jewish Community High School. • Collecting up to 30 credits earns students the Jewish Community High School Letter of Credit Recognition, which demonstrates a commitment through senior year Jewish education.

- Students may also earn the following: Certificate in Camp Counseling and Youth Leadership; Certificate in Service Learning; and Certificate in Hebrew Conversation — Ulpan.
- Students who complete the two-year Isaac Mayer Wise Reform Teaching Certificate Program receive a Teaching Certificate for Reform religious schools recognized throughout the U.S. This program of Jewish studies is for students in grades 11 and 12 who have been Confirmed in a Reform Movement synagogue.
- Year-long courses are divided into several subject areas. The following are a sample of potential course offerings in each area — Bible: Authority and Rebellion — Survey of Bible, Israelite Nation in Crisis, Bible Scenes/Parshat Hashavua, After the Ten Commandments, Joshua; Hebrew: Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced Ulpan, Honors Ulpan, Conversational Yiddish; Literature: Jewish Literature, Advanced Jewish Literature, Hebrew Literature; Jewish Ethics/Values: Jewish Heritage Film Analysis, Pirke Avot, Midrash, Jewish MTV, Video Values, EcoZionism and Jewish Ecology; Contemporary Jewish Issues: Current Events in the Jewish World, Understanding Israel, Teen Issues, Cults, Evolving Role of Women in Judaism, Comparative Judaism; Jewish Life and Beliefs: The Jewish Calendar, Jewish Law, Jewish Life Cycle, Spirituality, Matters of Life and Death, Jewish Life through Theater, Creative Crafts Selections; History: History of the Jews, Ancient Jewish History, The American Jewish Experience, Politics of the Middle East, Jewish Images on the Silver Screen, Famous Jews; Education: Education, Youth Leadership, Jewish History for the Youth Leader.
- 12th grade students may take certain college credit bearing courses, due to a unique relationship with Gratz College. Students must earn a grade of B or better in these courses and must complete the assigned work, including exams and research papers. Courses include: Comparative Religion, Israel Advocacy and Awareness, BioMedical Ethics, Psalms and Proverbs, Jewish Theory and Thought, and high Hebrew levels.
- *Kenneth I. Rothbart Distance Learning Program for Teens* is an online distance learning program focused entirely on Jewish adolescent education. Classes include Israel: Current Events and Controversies, The Torah's Top 50 Ideas, Introduction to Education I, and Dilemmas in Jewish History: From Abraham to Shabbetai Zevi. Students can earn one Jewish Community High School credit per course per semester.

Informal/Co-Curricular:

- Students can earn Jewish Community High School credits while on Jewish educational programs and youth group Shabbatonim, conventions, and retreats.
- Students can earn credits through other Jewish educational summer programs approved by Jewish Community High School.
- The school has several part-time Student Life Coordinators to increase opportunities for peer interaction and socialization while at school and provide extra-curricular programming and retreats.
- Most branch locations have peer-led student councils.

Faculty:

Number:

Approximately 60 teachers

Qualifications:

Most have a minimum of a master's degree or other formal Judaic education in the area in which they teach. Faculty of courses eligible for college credit must hold a minimum of a master's degree or significant graduate study in the area of instruction.

<i>Auspices and Governance:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is housed within Gratz College. Financial issues, such as funding and billing, are taken care of by Gratz administration. Oversight and policy are through the Jewish Community High School of Gratz College Board of Directors, a committee of the Gratz College Board of Governors. • Jewish Community High School is thus able to focus its attention on areas of curriculum, staff development, and student resources. • Gratz is highly supportive of the high school. Jewish Community High School gains legitimacy through its relationship and affiliation with Gratz.
<i>Budget:</i>	<p>Overall Budget: \$1.1 million</p> <p>Income Sources: Tuition, allocation from Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, and miscellaneous fees.</p> <p>Student Tuition: \$805–\$1,270 depending upon individual program; \$75 registration fee. \$95 graduation fee.</p>
<i>Recruitment and Retention:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting Within Congregational Schools: The Branch Director, Director of Student Services, or Student Life Coordinator conducts recruitment presentations in “feeder” synagogues, for both post-bar/bat mitzvah students and post-confirmation students. The high school additionally sends recruitment mailings to all potential students from these synagogues. • High Academic Standards: The school places great emphasis on academic expectations. It feels that teens take the program more seriously when their valuable time is respected through serious academic expectations. Graded tests, papers, or other evaluative strategies are a motivation for dedicated study. Certain classes for seniors are eligible for college credit. While these require additional work and are taught with greater rigor, they have been very important in terms of retention through 12th grade. • Offering Special Needs Programs: The school offers several self-contained programs, as well as support services (a full-time director and a counselor) for students with developmental and learning disabilities. This includes services for students who are mainstreamed into regular classes — currently almost 5% of the student body.
<i>Challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overly-academic reputation/image of the program: The program’s greatest selling point can also be its “toughest sell,” as students are aware that more will be required of them (tests and homework) than in other supplementary school programs. • Image of the program as “not cool”: While a selling point of the school to prospective families is that it has been in existence for many years (in many instances, students’ parents were participants in the program), this can often position the school as undesirable to students. Jewish Community high school desires increased innovation as part of both its formal and informal educational program. • Strengthening opportunities for socialization: The school is considering how to introduce new students into social networks. • Shifting their stance to more flexible scheduling: The school is considering how to accommodate students’ hectic schedules. It is trying to find ways for students to keep up with their studies, even if, for example, they want to take off time to participate in secular school related activities.
<i>Contact:</i>	<p>Ari Y. Goldberg, Director (215) 635–7300</p>

Judaica High School

ID Information:	Judaica High School 4200 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL 33137 Tel: (305) 576-4030 • Website: www.caje-miami.org
Grades:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8th through 10th grades in South Dade. Program also includes a college credit track for grades 10 through 12 in North Dade and grades 11 through 12 in South Dade.
Enrollment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 175 students are enrolled in either pre- or post-confirmation programming. An enrollment policy has been adopted in recent years, which states that the program is specifically designed for synagogue members. The policy was initiated both to prevent families from dropping their memberships and to encourage students to maintain relationships with their rabbis and education directors. The South Dade location serves five synagogues.
Program Description/Goals:	JHS is a high school program for students in grades 8 through 12. It is a partnership between CAJE and several area synagogues. CAJE staff provides the educational and administrative leadership of this program, which serves the teen members of the partner synagogues. Students are enrolled for the program through their synagogues, which have an active role in JHS. The program provides an opportunity for students to interact with their Jewish peers while learning about Judaism in an exciting and nurturing environment.
Meeting Times:	One evening per week
Yearly School Calendar:	The year is divided into two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Two hours per evening
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take a combination of required and elective grade level classes. Rabbis of participating congregations prepare their individual students for confirmation during 10th grade. Beyond confirmation, students are able to take courses at JHS through the local community college for advanced credits. The following are examples of core courses for grades 8 through 12: Jewish Values, Jewish Culture, Tannakh, Rabbinic Texts, Contemporary Jewish Issues, Jewish History, and Israel. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <p>Participating synagogues design their own informal education programming. The school encourages students to participate in area youth group programming.</p>
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>10 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Background in the subject area they are hired to teach, as well as some teaching experience.</p>

<i>Auspices and Governance:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JHS operates under the auspices of CAJE Miami. • The director of the program hires all staff and designs the overall program. • The educational directors participate as Professional Advisors helping to shape the structure and curriculum of the school. • The program serves students affiliated with participating Conservative and Reform synagogues.
<i>Budget:</i>	<p>Overall Budget: \$159,100</p> <p>Income Sources: Greater Miami Jewish Federation; tuition and fees collected from synagogues.</p> <p>Student Tuition: Each synagogue sets its own fees and charges families directly. JHS charges each synagogue \$255/student per year.</p>
<i>Recruitment and Retention:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participating synagogues are responsible for student recruitment. • Retaining students is a challenge, as they view the program as “another extra-curricular.” • Most students who stay through 8th grade tend to continue through confirmation. • Approximately 1/4 of students take courses through 12th grade.
<i>Challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the retention of students, the school confronts a challenge in finding relevant and engaging packaged curriculum for the program. • Another main challenge for the program is securing appropriate facilities.
<i>Contact:</i>	<p>Valerie Mitrani (305) 576-4030 valeriemitrani@caje-miami.org</p>

Kulanu: Benson Zinbarg Jewish Education for Teens

ID Information:	Kulanu c/o United Jewish Federation 1035 Newfield Avenue, Suite 200, Stamford, CT 06905–2591 Tel: (203) 321–1373 • Email: kulanu@ujf.org • Website: www.ujf.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	In 2005–2006, 164 students from the Greater Stamford area. Most of the current students are affiliated with four congregations (Conservative and Reform).
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in September 2003, Kulanu (“All Together”) is a fun and stimulating evening Jewish education program for teens from Greater Stamford and the surrounding areas. It comprises a student-centered community of Jewish teens from different backgrounds and beliefs, who come together for several hours each week to learn about their rich Jewish tradition. Students have the opportunity to learn, explore, and deepen their Jewish identity. Kulanu creates a vibrant pluralistic community for Jewish youth. The program provides an opportunity for students to connect, socialize, and form lasting friendships. At Kulanu, fun and learning go hand in hand. As students progress through their high school years, Kulanu provides intellectual and social foundation. Kulanu emphasizes respect for Jewish diversity and focuses on the connections between teens and the local Jewish community, individual congregations, and Israel. Planning the new program: Kulanu integrated two previously existing teen programs, Mercaz (had 40–50 students) and Etgar Hebrew High School (had about 15 students). The process of restructuring began in 2002, a year before the school opened, when the first director was asked to examine the two existing programs and to offer recommendations to the Community Commission for Jewish Education (CCJE). Upon the director’s recommendations, the community decided that they needed to build a new teen education program. They formed the following committees: curriculum, marketing and outreach, teachers, finance and budget, and teen committee. The CCJE also ran a focus group for 7th graders to elicit their views of what should be included in a teen program. In the spring of the planning year, leadership engaged in aggressive recruiting from the local day school, area congregational schools, and youth groups. In the summer of the first year, the director began to hire faculty and to actively raise funds for the program.
Meeting Times:	Wednesday nights and/or Sunday mornings
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Two or three classes per day
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have the option of studying on two different days, for 2–5 hours per week. They can enroll for Wednesday nights (two hours) and/or Sunday mornings (two or three hours). All classes are offered at various participating synagogues. For every hour of study, students are able to take two classes during the year (one in the fall and one in the spring). Students register for their 1st–3rd choices for all class periods, and are enrolled on a first come first serve basis. On Wednesday nights, 8th graders take one “core” course. The other course period is filled with an elective. All 9th to 12th graders take two electives from

	<p>five different categories: Jewish History, Jewish Thought, Jewish Values, Jewish Culture, and Israel. They may take only one class per category per semester. All Sunday courses are electives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample class titles include: Scrapbooking and Family History, Jewish Revolutionaries, X-Rated Bible Stories, Torah Yoga, Salute to the Israeli Army, What does it mean to be a Jewish Teen?, Film It!, Red State, Blue State and the Jewish State of Mind. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has designed several unique opportunities for informal educational programs, including a movie night, participation in the Kulanu Klezmer jazz ensemble, and various school trips. Students who complete the Madrikhim leadership training class are eligible to serve as teaching assistants. The school will also host one Shabbaton this year and one whole school mitzvah project.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>16</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Kulanu carefully recruits new teachers who have experience in specific areas (video production, Torah yoga), and who have the ability to impart knowledge and excite teens with their subject matter.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kulanu operates under the auspices of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. The school has an advisory board, comprised of representatives from the different communities and congregations. The school has formed a relationship with area youth groups, and as a result has been able to draw upon youth advisors and directors as faculty. A Teen Council has been established and continues to act as a sounding board for the Kulanu director.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$277,700</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>The program is supported by the Jewish Community Commission for Jewish Education of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (\$38,000) and the UJA/Federation of Greenwich (\$20,000); area congregations (each of the six participating synagogues give \$4,500); private donors; and the Jewish Community Endowment Foundation.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$825 for the five-hour Sunday/Wednesday program; \$775 for the four-hour Sunday/Wednesday program; \$725 for the three-hour Sunday program; \$625 for the two-hour Wednesday program.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kulanu has hired a new full-time director who will focus on documenting, recording, marketing, and outreach for the program. The school's student recruitment efforts include the following: Recruitment letters from rabbis to 7th grade congregants; free sweatpants if they enroll by a certain date; a recruitment brochure and course catalogue; "Bring a Friend" promotions, with incentives such as movie tickets and gift certificates; guest nights and open houses; and parlor meetings for parents and teens.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kulanu successfully retains many of its students by facilitating “town meetings” in order to elicit recommendations and reactions from the parents and students; placing personal calls to students and sending a letter during the summer to remind them to sign up for the following year; and granting graduating students a “letter of achievement,” a detailed transcript, and faculty recommendations to be included with their college applications.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A challenge for the director is being able to develop relationships with professional leaders from disparate communities in order to create a unified vision. The director also needs to be able to bring in partnering institutions, such as the local JCCs. Another challenge is retaining 11th and 12th graders who are juggling SATs, college applications, AP classes, varsity sports teams, and other high school activities.
Contact:	<p>Shari Weinberger, Kulanu Director KulanuDirector@ujf.org (203) 321-1373 Ext. 115</p>

Los Angeles Hebrew High School

ID Information:	Los Angeles Hebrew High School • The Jewish Academy of Los Angeles 5900 Sepulveda Boulevard, Suite 560, Van Nuys, CA 91411 Tel: (818) 901-8893 • Fax: (818) 901-8896 Email: office@LAHHS.org • Website: www.lahhs.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 500 students. 75% of the student body belongs to Conservative congregations; 25% are members of other congregations, or are students from non-affiliated households.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Los Angeles Hebrew High School is the high school of the Conservative Movement, and has served the educational needs of the greater Los Angeles community since 1949. Its program is built upon a core of Hebrew language acquisition and text skills. The core is supplemented by an array of electives and a series of weekend retreats at Camp Ramah in Ojai. The mission of LAHHS is to provide text-based Jewish education; to significantly contribute to the intellectual, emotional, social, and religious growth of post-bar/bat mitzvah students; and to enhance their lives through an appreciation of lifelong Jewish learning and living. LAHHS seeks to accomplish its mission by: emphasizing competency in Hebrew language and literature; advancing the study of primary Jewish texts — biblical, rabbinic, philosophical, historical, and ethical; fostering a love and appreciation for the State of Israel and its people; teaching and modeling the principles and religious practice of Conservative Judaism; promoting Jewish learning and dialogue between students and inspiring students; providing opportunities for peer interaction and the nurturing of friendships among students throughout greater Los Angeles; promoting Zionism, teaching the history of Israel, and making a connection to the people of Israel; offering those experiences which foster an appreciation of Jewish values for the benefit of the student, the Jewish community, and the community at large.
Meeting Times:	Weekdays at seven local branch locations (meeting times vary); Sundays, from 9 am to 12:30 pm, at LA Pierce College
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	6.5–7.25 hours per week
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take five classes per year, including one elective, one class focusing on Modern Hebrew, one class focusing on proficiency of ancient Hebrew within text study, and two specific grade level “core courses” drawn from Ethics, Modern Jewish History, Rabbinics, Israel, or Prayer. Core courses: (8th grade) Parshat Hashavuah, Ethics and Values; (9th grade) Modern Jewish History, Rabbinics, Pirkei Avot; (10th grade) Israel, Tefillah/Siddur; (11th grade) Junior Seminar, Chaggim, the Five Megillot, Hot Topics; (12th grade) Senior Seminar, Faith, Comparative Judaism, Hot Topics. Sample electives include Israeli Dancing, Current Events, and Conversational Hebrew. The school is able to meet the varied academic needs of its students by offering nine levels of Hebrew as well as different levels of the text-based classes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-time students can receive up to 10 foreign language credits per year for their Hebrew language study. Approximately half of the eligible students count the credits toward their sole language requirement and half utilize the credit for a second foreign language, enabling their study to count as “extra-curricular” on their transcripts. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <p>LAHHS requires attendance at one of three Shabbaton Weekends at Camp Ramah that are offered during the year, during which students explore the year’s theme in an informal setting.</p>
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>Approximately 40 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>LAHHS employs teachers from a range of religious denominations and educational backgrounds; many of its teachers are rabbinical students from the Ziegler School of the Conservative movement. Prospective teachers present a model lesson to demonstrate that they actively engage students in non-lecture format, text-based learning, and possess the ability to help students make personal meaning of the text. All teachers are trained and supervised by the Hebrew program coordinator, Judaic Studies coordinator, or principal, who observe teachers on a regular basis and also conduct in-service learning programs.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAHHS operates under the auspices of the Conservative Movement as an independent institution. The school utilizes texts produced by the Conservative movement, and students are asked to wear kippot and observe kashrut during LAHHS programming. While the expectations and policies of the school are made clear, the administration attempts to create an environment in which they respect students’ varied observance backgrounds.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$1.3 million</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>LAHHS is a “stand alone,” independent institution; its board of trustees and Hebrew High board work with the school administration to create and approve policies and budgetary issues. The majority (75%) of LAHHS’s income is from tuition; the remainder is from fundraising (15%), as well as grants, gifts, contributions from the BJE, and interest from the endowment fund (3%).</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$2,395 for the full-time program (with reductions for siblings); \$1,850 for the part-time (Sunday only) program.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations at 15 area institutions: The principal makes 15 “live” 30-minute presentations to potential students from surrounding Conservative synagogues. During the presentation, the principal outlines the program, a recruitment video is shown, and current LAHHS students discuss their experiences. Open houses on Sundays: Sunday open houses enable prospective students to view all 500 students interacting during regular programming hours. Mailings: LAHHS sends out between four and six recruitment postcards to all 7th grade area Conservative movement students, as well as to all who have inquired for information throughout the year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other Recruitment Strategies: “Word of mouth” is a powerful recruitment tool, as students tell their friends that their educational experience is relevant and meaningful. LAHHS has developed a sophisticated brochure and a website. LAHHS commits \$5,000 per year to advertising in the area Jewish newspaper.• Creating a culture within the school of “serious study”: It is believed that the school is able to retain students because students recognize that they are dedicating their time toward receiving a top-notch education.• Transportation: LAHHS caters to students from a wide geographic area. Parents appreciate that students with lengthy commutes are provided with transportation.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While LAHHS points to its autonomy as a key to its success, it recognizes that additional personnel are required to oversee all aspects of school administration (e.g. the school maintains its own billing department).• The number of students coming up through the Conservative movement school system is dwindling due to demographic changes. LAHHS needs to reach out to other movements or find new markets in order to continue sustained growth• Finding qualified teachers of texts who can make classical Jewish texts relevant and exciting is always difficult.• The school is undergoing a new major gifts campaign, which is challenging.
Contact:	Bill Cohen, Head of School (818) 901-8893 bill@lahhs.org

MAKOM: The Hebrew High School of Greater New Haven

ID Information:	MAKOM 360 Amity Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525 Tel: (203) 387-2424 • Website: www.makomnewhaven.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Over 250 students
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAKOM aims to encourage its students to perpetuate their Jewish heritage, to continue to study, and to be actively involved in Jewish life during their high school years and beyond. MAKOM offers its students a unique, pluralistic, educational, and social community. MAKOM aims to help teens develop a personal, ethical, and moral philosophy, grounded in a spirit of inquiry and knowledge of the Jewish tradition. Its goal is to strengthen the Jewish commitment of its teens and to develop a positive Jewish identity and set of values within the framework of a united Jewish people. The concepts of <i>klal Yisrael</i> (Jewish pluralism), <i>talmud torah</i> (love of study), <i>tikkun olam</i> (repairing the world), <i>gemilut chasadim</i> (acts of kindness), and <i>derech erez</i> (respect for others) are intrinsic to the mission of MAKOM.
Meeting Times:	7 to 9 pm on Wednesdays; Honors classes 6 to 7 pm on Wednesdays, and 9:45 am to 12:15 pm on Sundays
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Three classes on Wednesdays and two classes on Sundays
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each grade level has a specific enrollment requirement. Students are also required to take a specific number of courses in particular areas of study. Class choices are honored on a first-come, first-served basis. The grade requirements are: (8th and 9th grade) social action requirement; (10th grade) year-long participation in one social action program plus Introduction to the Holocaust class; (11th grade) enrollment in one of a series of history classes; (12th grade) Senior Seminar, helping students to discover and define their own meaning of Judaism. The required subject areas are History (one course); Bible, Rabbinics, and Philosophy (two courses); and Ethics and Contemporary Issues (two courses). Within these subject areas, a variety of courses are offered, such as: The Man Moses in Text and Commentaries (Bible, Rabbinics, and Philosophy); Talmud for Dummies (Bible, Rabbinics, and Philosophy); Through the Lens: Israel in Film (Ethics and Contemporary Issues); God Talk (Ethics and Contemporary Issues); Internationally Speaking: The Mid-East as a Boot Camp for Diplomacy (History); and Strong Women, Tough Decisions, and the Feminine Ideal (History). Electives include: Growing up Jewish; Klezmer; Holiday Cooking; Beginning Yiddish; and Conversational Hebrew (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced); and Israeli Dance, Art, and Drama. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAKOM has a three-tiered program entitled <i>Leaders of Jewish Initiative and Community</i>. Students are encouraged to participate in the course “Super G.L.E.W.,” which focuses on gaining understanding of both the local and global Jewish community as well as on community service. Subsequently, teachers

	<p>recommend students to join the school's Teen Leadership Council (TLC) in 10th grade, in which they create and implement team-based projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school also sponsors the following special programs: a day trip to New York, a January long-weekend trip, and a Tikkun Olam Night (required for 9th and 10th graders).
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>31</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>All have post-secondary degrees, including bachelor's, master's, Ph.D.s, and two MDs.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAKOM is sponsored and subsidized by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven. It is a program of the Department of Jewish Education, which is under the auspices of the federation. MAKOM is a community-based, pluralistic program. It has no formal association with any synagogue, though four run their confirmation programs through MAKOM.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$225,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>MAKOM does its own fundraising (approximately \$20,000-\$22,000 per year). It also receives a federation allocation, which is part of the general allocation for the Department of Jewish Education.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$650 per year for one evening a week study; \$700 for more than two hours.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plurality of students comes from Conservative congregations, though there is good representation from Orthodox and Reform congregations as well. There are no day high schools in New Haven though there are two day schools through 8th grade (one Conservative, one Orthodox). Nearly 100% of day school graduates who stay in New Haven attend MAKOM (many graduates of the Orthodox school go to out-of-town yeshiva high schools). About 37% of congregational school graduates attend MAKOM. No synagogues run their own high school programs, so MAKOM has no direct competition. Arnold Carmel (the director) works with rabbis and synagogue education directors to help encourage enrollment at MAKOM. An attrition study determined that required athletic schedules were a primary conflict and that the day of the week did not make a difference. In part this is why MAKOM added Sunday morning classes. Most attrition occurs between 8th–9th and 10th–11th grades.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finances: The school has limited federation support and is unable to raise tuition any further at this time. MAKOM is exploring new ways to attract the 60% of students who do not current attend and different ways of branding MAKOM. The school is also continuing to explore ways to remove constraints imposed from the outside such as athletic schedules.
Contact:	<p>Dr. Arnold Carmel, Principal a.carmel@jewishnewhaven.org</p>

Midrasha in Berkeley

ID Information:	Midrasha in Berkeley 1301 Oxford St., Berkeley, CA 94709 Tel: (510) 843–4667 • Fax: (510) 843–4642 • Website: www.midrasha.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	In 2005–2006 Midrasha had 193 students. Midrasha is open to affiliated and non-affiliated students. Students need not have previous religious school experience to enroll.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midrasha is part of a community system of four supplementary high schools under the aegis of the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay's Center for Jewish Living and Learning. The four midrashot are attached programmatically. • Midrasha provides Jewish learning to high school students in northern Alameda and western Contra Costa counties in a supplementary setting. It offers a broad range of interesting and challenging courses to students with a strong Jewish background and to those with little former training or knowledge — classes ranging from Talmud and Hebrew to Jewish films and drama. • The program provides students with the skills and knowledge they will need as committed Jewish adults. • Midrasha offers a larger social group of Jewish teenagers than exists at any one synagogue and the opportunity to form lasting friendships. The program provides a warm social environment in the classroom and at retreat weekends. • The school's faculty provides students with positive, knowledgeable role models of successful young Jewish adults who are at home in Judaism and the secular world. • It is an inter-congregational school where members of all congregations feel at home. It is also open to non-synagogue members. • Although students represent a broad range of religious observance, kashrut and Shabbat are observed at all school programs and activities.
Meeting Times:	Sundays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm; optional classes also on midweek afternoons (times vary)
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Three hours per Sunday; 1.5–2 hours for each midweek class
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each grade level has a common “core hour” of studies, which is supplemented by elective courses. • Students also have the option of participating in Tanach; Talmud; and Yoga, Art and Sacred Text classes on midweek afternoons. • Core courses: 8th grade (<i>Gesharim</i>), Ethics; 9th grade (<i>Etgar</i>), Jewish Identity, focusing on “who we are,” comparative Judaism, and relationships; 10th–12th grades: Bible first semester, Jewish History or Bible second semester. • Elective Retreat Programs (in which most students participate): 10th grade (<i>Kesher Aleph</i>), Israeli history, culture, literature, and politics; 11th–12th grades (<i>Kesher Bet</i>), one year studying the American Jewish experience and one year studying Jewish thought and spirituality. • Other elective possibilities include: Hebrew Israeli Dance, The Ethics of Wizardry, Jews on the Stage, Israeli Culture Through Film, and Spark: Heartaction.

	<p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midrasha is successful in providing an opportunity on Sunday mornings for students to expand their social circle outside their congregations. • For the past 16 years, the Center for Jewish Living and Learning (CJLL) has sponsored and organized four retreats per year for all area Midrasha programs. While the initial retreats were envisioned as solely for the 9th grade students (four retreats are required for the 9th grade), the federation began designing retreats for all school levels when the participants inquired about the possibility of retreats for future years. • All retreats are tied into the grade level's core curriculum (Jewish identity, Israel, spirituality, theology/philosophy). • While the 10th–12th graders participate in the same retreat weekend, they are divided by grade level for educational programming.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>15 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>The school is able to attract a wide range of charismatic and knowledgeable faculty who appeal to different types of students. Recruitment is done mainly by “word of mouth.” Some of the faculty are alumni of the program.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midrasha is an independent institution that is supported by a partnership of synagogues, parents and the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay Center for Jewish Living and Learning. • Every participating synagogue selects three members to sit on the Midrasha board. While it was initially difficult for the individual synagogues to relinquish autonomy over their programs, they are now pleased that they do not need to micromanage educational programming.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$195,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Midrasha receives funds from varied resources, such as the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay Center for Jewish Living and Learning (\$157/student this year in a one-year grant), participating congregations (\$180/each participating member), student tuition, and private fund-raising. Because it is not under the auspices of a central agency or a sponsoring synagogue, it is able to roll any end-of-year profits back into Midrasha (or, likewise, is able to dip into its funds when needed for desired projects or to cover year-end deficits). Midrasha appreciates the autonomy it has over making policy and funding decisions for its students.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$480 for affiliated students; \$660 for unaffiliated students. The school charges \$310 for each of the weekday study components, for students who are already enrolled in Sunday study. Additionally, Midrasha charges for participation in the retreats (\$620 for affiliated students; \$665 for unaffiliated students — subsidized; OR \$920 affiliated; \$965 unaffiliated — unsubsidized; parents self select which fee to pay). There is also financial aid for all programs.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting bar/bat mitzvah age students: Midrasha sends a congratulatory card to every area bar/bat mitzvah child, as well as a coupon for “bagel bucks,” redeemable for snacks during the Midrasha break time. • 7th graders within congregational schools: The administration sends out recruitment materials and catalogues to area 7th grade Hebrew school

	<p>students, as well as those who have recently become a bar/bat mitzvah. They also make visits to area congregations, during which they show a recruitment video.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting from day schools: A large percentage of the area day schools' 8th graders (as well as many students from Jewish Community High school of the Bay) are concurrently enrolled at Midrasha, as the school retreats and weekly classes provide opportunities for them to further friendships they established during joint bar/bat mitzvah year preparatory classes. • Reaching out to parents of bar/bat mitzvah age students: An information packet is sent to prospective parents. The school also offers an open house for parents. • Student retreats have been found to be an extremely effective tool for student retention.
Challenges:	<p>One of Midrasha's current challenges is financial. The teen population of its feeder congregations is diminishing, and for the past year its student population has declined. The school anticipates this continuing for a year or two. Its costs remain fixed, or are on the rise, so the declining tuition forced Midrasha to cut its faculty rather than face a third year of a deficit budget.</p>
Contact:	<p>Diane Bernbaum, Director (510) 843-4667 diane@midrasha.org</p>

Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor High School

ID Information:	The Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027 Tel: (212) 678–8824 • Website: www.jtsa.edu/davidson/prozdor
Grades:	7th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 150 students
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivry Prozdor has traditionally existed as a “school after-school.” It was founded as a small, elite institution to service day school graduates. It has morphed into a school that offers all Jewish teens (both graduates of day schools and synagogue schools) a content-rich, text-based curriculum, supplemented by art and culture events in NYC. The program is modeled on the college experience, in which students choose the courses that best suit their interests. Students do not have homework; instead, teachers offer suggested readings throughout the year. Teachers offer narrative and graded report cards to those students who fill out and submit an electronic request, including an essay question, to the instructor. Students in all Hebrew language courses are automatically graded, with no request necessary. Academics are highly valued, and the school seeks to hire leaders and academics in the Jewish community as teachers. Students at Ivry Prozdor develop the textual, linguistic, and interpretive skills that comprise the foundations of Jewish literacy. Through study and practice, students explore their membership in the Jewish people and their relationships with God and Torah, family and community, and Israel and America. They grow as people, as Jews, and as leaders of their communities. Staff and faculty serve as role models for students, demonstrating through their own actions key values such as <i>talmud Torah</i> (commitment to the study of Torah), and <i>derech erez</i> (respect for others).
Meeting Times:	Sundays at the Jewish Theological Seminary location; weeknights at branch locations in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Five hours (course periods) per week: three on Sundays; two on weeknights
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school offers a range of levels and options from which students can choose. During the week, students take electives. On Sundays, students participate in a particular academic track. Students enroll in one of the following three tracks for an entire school year: Intensive Hebrew — NETA intensive Hebrew program (two hours), one hour elective, and extra Hebrew days of learning during the year; Beit Midrash — one hour Hebrew culture, one hour Hevrutah, one hour Shiur; Jewish Civilization and History (80% of students enroll in this track) — one hour elective, one hour Hebrew culture, one hour core seminar. Core Seminars: (7th–8th grade) Biblical Civilization, (9th grade) Rabbinic Civilization, (10th grade) Medieval Civilization, (11th grade) Modern Jewish Civilization, and (12th grade) Contemporary Jewish Civilization.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hebrew culture offerings for those not enrolled in the Intensive Hebrew track: Second Language Acquisition; Introduction to Zionism (a required core course); Portraits of Israel, Relating to Israel, Israel — As You Have Never Seen It Before!; The Struggle Within; and My World, Israel, and Me. Electives stem from eight subject headings: Bible; Rabbinics; Jewish Thoughts and Philosophy; Politics, Community, and Leadership; Israel Studies; Art; Jewish Practice; and Contemporary Jewish Issues. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students participate in a range of academic and social field trips in NYC. Students participate in the Panim el Panim trip to Washington, DC. Yearly Shabbatonim.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>20</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Most Ivry Prozdor instructors hold, or are pursuing, master's degrees or doctorates in Jewish Studies and Jewish Education. Some have, or are pursuing, rabbinic ordination or investiture as cantors. Some are professional artists, singers, "dot-com'ers," or writers. Teachers devote many hours to planning and professional development.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	Ivry Prozdor operates under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$300,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Mainly tuition driven, in addition to the Rebecca and Israel Ivry Endowment Fund.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$2,100 for two days/week; \$1,600 for Sunday only.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	Recruitment has become a larger concern in the past decade as more (elementary) day school students elect to attend area Jewish day high schools.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention are great challenges. Prozdor is seeking to reinvigorate its program by strengthening and expanding its presence both inside and outside Manhattan.
Contact:	<p>Bess Adler, Principal</p> <p>(212) 678-8824, Ext. 3</p>

Tichon Atlanta

ID Information:	Tichon Atlanta 1776 Old Spring House Lane, Atlanta, GA 30338 Tel: (770) 455-6504 • Website: www.cjee.org
Grades:	8th through 10th
Enrollment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 375 students. Most students come from eight area Reform and Conservative congregational schools.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tichon Atlanta's mission is to prepare teens in a safe and enjoyable learning environment to be knowledgeable Jews, with a sense of commitment to Judaism and Israel. It is dedicated to excellence in Jewish education, to the continuity of the Jewish people, and to the intellectual, emotional, social, creative, and spiritual growth of each student. The goals of Tichon Atlanta are the following: to provide the adolescent with positive opportunities to develop and enhance self esteem; to provide positive peer group experiences in an educational setting; to provide the participant with opportunities to select and explore various aspects of his or her Jewish identity, as well as issues and topics of concern to Jewish adolescents; to provide the adolescent with opportunities to form opinions from a Jewish perspective concerning social and political issues; to foster critical thinking skills; and to provide a secure and non-threatening environment for the adolescent that promotes an atmosphere conducive to the questioning and challenging of ideas. Tichon Atlanta was originally instituted because of a low return rate of 8th graders to the individual congregational schools. All area congregations discontinued their programs, which were operating at a financial loss, and instituted the one-evening-a-week program at Tichon Atlanta. The rabbis of participating synagogues teach the 10th graders of their synagogues at Tichon Atlanta, preparing them for the confirmation ceremonies of their congregations. Although the school is a formal learning program, its goal is to create opportunities for formal learning within an informal atmosphere. While the program enforces attendance requirements, it does not administer tests or grades. Programming for grades 11 and 12 is currently being reformulated.
Meeting Times:	8th grade students meet on Wednesday evenings from 7–9 pm; 9th–10th grade students meet on Monday evenings from 7–9 pm
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters per year
Daily School Schedule:	Two classes per day
Curricular Content:	Formal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the first class period, each student takes one core class for a full academic year: (8th grade) Jewish Issues (note: two synagogues offer their own core course for their students); (9th grade) Modern Jewish History, Jewish Literacy (note: three synagogues offer their own core course for their students; day school graduates learn in a special class); (10th grade) Confirmation (note: students who are not members of a participating synagogues take a course in Comparative Religion). Each student additionally chooses one elective per semester, taught during the second class period.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following are examples of electives for 8th grade: 7 Habits of Highly Effective Jewish Teens, Calligraphy — Hebrew and English, Hebrew I and II, Holocaust, Mishna I and II, Photo-journaling and Scrapbook, and Teaching Teacher-Assistants. The following are examples of electives for 9–10th grades: American Jewish History through Film, Hebrew I and II, Holocaust, Jewish Humor, Jewish Law and Ethics, Jewish Outdoor Leadership, Jewish Mosaic Art, Jewish Watercolors, Mishna I and II, Mysticism, and Yiddish. Students participate in a scheduled one-hour break time between each 45-minute period. This break time is an essential component of the program, which meets the students' agenda of socializing with peers. Through Tichon Atlanta, many students cement relationships that were forged during summer experiences. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this time, Tichon Atlanta does not offer an informal education component, so as not to infringe on the domain of the congregational youth movements. The school attempts to work in conjunction with youth groups in order to be able to "see each child holistically." All area youth programs are advertised at Tichon Atlanta.
Faculty:	<p>Number: Approximately 40 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications: The school tries to hire younger teachers, and often hires youth directors, who possess vast experience in relating to teenagers. Continuous "in-service" training is offered to the teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoire.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	Tichon Atlanta is governed by the Center for Jewish Education and Experiences (CJEE).
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget: \$313,000</p> <p>Income Sources: Student tuition, approximately \$95,000 from federation, approximately \$8,000 in donations, and \$5,000 from synagogue membership fees.</p> <p>Student Tuition: \$485. There is a \$15 "early-bird" deduction and a \$15 late registration fee. Members in "good standing" of participating synagogues receive a tuition reduction of \$25. Parents with multiple children enrolled receive a \$50 reduction for every child after the first.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mailings and emails: Each participating synagogue sends the principal a mailing list of its 7th grade class, and the principal then contacts these potential students via emails and mailings. In-school presentations: The principal speaks with each 7th grade class in all participating synagogues.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the key challenges facing the high school is obtaining the "buy in" of the area rabbis. Tichon Atlanta facilitates rabbi involvement by having them teach 10th graders, as preparation for individual congregational confirmation ceremonies. Every once and a while a congregation will decide to pull out of Tichon Atlanta, for various reasons such as the desire to prepare students individually for 10th grade confirmation or the belief that the program is detracting from a congregational youth program. The principal also maintains continuous contact with congregational education directors to keep them informed of student attendance and other issues that might arise.
Contact:	<p>Robyn Faintich, Director robyn@cjee.org (404) 961-9961</p>

Tucson High School for Jewish Studies

ID Information:	Tucson High School of Jewish Studies 3822 E. River Road, Tucson, AZ 85718 Tel: (520) 577-9393 • Fax: (520) 577-0734 • Website: www.jewishtucson.org
Grades:	9th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 150 students. While four synagogues (three Reform, one Conservative) subsidize the program, other synagogues (including Orthodox) send their students for study and give occasional subsidies.
Program Description/Goals:	Tucson High School for Jewish Studies provides a stimulating academic environment in which Jewish high school students further their Jewish education. In addition, Hebrew High students enrich their social interactions and explore their responsibility to the Jewish community and the community at large through participation in projects of <i>tikkun olam</i> (repairing the world).
Meeting Times:	Tuesday and Thursday evenings, from 7 to 9 pm. Tuesday and Thursday classes are offered at different synagogue sites.
Yearly School Calendar:	Two semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Each evening session is comprised of two 50-minute sessions, with a 20-minute break in between.
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have the choice of registering for one or two nights of classes. • On Tuesday evenings, students can choose from approximately 18–20 electives that are offered. During the second hour, the four sponsoring synagogues conduct confirmation preparation. • On Thursday evenings, participating students take Hebrew classes for high school foreign language credit. • Of the 150 students, approximately one third attend both Tuesday and Thursday nights. • Students completing all four years of study receive a Certificate of Completion; other students receive a Certificate of Participation. • The following classes are examples of Tuesday evening electives: Performing Ensemble Choir, Women in Judaism, Creative Judaic Arts, Creative Jewish Foods and Cooking, Surfing the Jewish Net, and If You Were G–D. • In addition, some courses are required to fulfill various components of the program: Israel Experience (required for the Israel Experience Scholarship); How Do I Decide? (required for one participating synagogue's 9th graders); Living a Jewish Year (required for one participating synagogue's 9th graders); March of the Living (required for all participating in the program); Jewish Civics: Panim el Panim (required for all participating in the program); Individual synagogue confirmation classes. <p>Informal/Co-Curricular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not focus on informal education programming. • Many of the students are members of USY and BBYO. • Mitzvah/social action projects: The school encourages students to participate in community social action projects and initiatives. Some of the participating synagogues require these social action projects for confirmation. Some students participate in Youth Philanthropy Programming, in which they visit different social action and community

	<p>service organizations throughout the year and then meet to decide how to allocate school tzedakah funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school promotes and offers courses to prepare students for the following: Panim el Panim, March of the Living, and Summer Israel programming.
Faculty:	<p>Number:</p> <p>20 teachers</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <p>Faculty is comprised of professionals in the community, including educators, doctors, and lawyers.</p>
Auspices and Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tucson High School for Jewish Studies is administered by the local federation's Department of Jewish Education and Jewish Identity. The relationship with the federation allows for community-building across participating synagogues. The high school maintains a good relationship with participating synagogues. Educational directors from the synagogues teach at the school. In addition, the school addresses confirmation issues by building requirements into the structure of its program. The school maintains a board, comprised of the educational directors, other representatives of each synagogue, parents of current students, and parents of alumni.
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>\$60,000</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>The majority of the budget is derived from federation funding. The program is also subsidized by four participating synagogues.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$235 for Tuesday attendance; \$310 for Thursday attendance; \$480 for Tuesday/Thursday attendance.</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating synagogues actively promote the program, and recruit from the graduating 8th grade classes. Tucson High School for Jewish Studies sends out recruitment mailings to these 8th graders. The school takes out ads in the local Jewish paper. The school conducts open houses for 8th graders. Some students are attracted by the Thursday offering of receiving high school foreign language credit. However, many students drop out of the program once they have earned enough credits. The school is trying to capitalize on students' interest in social action/social justice programming, and hopes that they will attract more students by offering more courses and programming in this area.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of substantial attrition following 10th grade confirmation, the school has considered moving confirmation to 12th grade. At this time, the synagogues are not in favor of doing so. Another challenge is in reaching out to unaffiliated students. Some families believe that if they cannot make a commitment to both days, they should not register. The school tries to relay the message that it would rather have students register for one day than not register at all.
Contact:	<p>Elysa Ginsburg (520) 577-9393 Ext.124 eginsburg@jfsa.org</p>

Yachad (Greater Hartford Jewish Community High School)

ID Information:	Yachad — Greater Hartford 2626 Albany Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117 Tel: (860) 236-5611 • Website: www.yachad.net
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 250
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yachad's mission is to provide all local Jewish teens with a rich educational environment that: excites them to continue their Jewish education throughout their high school years and beyond; strengthens their Jewish commitment and encourages them to perpetuate their Jewish heritage; fosters identification and appreciation of the State of Israel and its importance to the Jewish people; supports affiliation with synagogues, youth groups, and the Jewish Community Center; and develops a strong, positive Jewish identity and set of values within the framework of a united Jewish people. In support of this mission, Yachad provides high quality education through: intellectual, cultural, and social stimulation that provokes higher level thinking; a curriculum that ranges from more rigorous study of text, commentaries, Hebrew language and history to creative arts, drama, and contemporary issues; encouraging students to interact with the subject matter in traditional and non-traditional settings; and courses which provide perspectives from a variety of Jewish affiliations, developing respect and understanding of all legitimate approaches and interpretations. Yachad also provides high quality educators who are selected for their subject matter expertise, because they relate to and engage young adults, and for their commitment to the mission of the school. Yachad was founded ten years ago. It was originally formed as a merger of two distinct learning programs (Midrasha, which met 2-3 days a week, and a Reform community program, Beit Noar, which was less of a time commitment). Neither program had the resources or staff to properly continue.
Meeting Times:	9th-12th grades meet on Monday evenings, and 8th grade meets on Wednesday evenings. In 2006-2007 a joint program with the Jewish Community Center on varying days of the week was started.
Yearly School Calendar:	8th grade: trimesters; 9th-12th grade: semesters
Daily School Schedule:	Two classes per day
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8th grade students sign up for one course each trimester, for a total of three courses. 9th-12th grade students register for two course periods each semester, for a total of four courses. Yachad also offers a Sunday Beit Sefer Tichon program at Emanuel Synagogue for students who cannot study during the week. Yachad offers Prozdor courses for students interested in more in-depth, text-based study and also some courses for college credit. Examples of 8th grade offerings: The Spanish Inquisition, Roots and Branches: An Introduction to Genealogy, Menschlikeit 101, Values through Art, Tzedakah: Money Matters, Interfaith Dialogue, Jews in the Entertainment World, Hidden Messages of Jewish Symbols: Kabbalah, Beit Midrash, Israel: A Tapestry of Jewish Life, Famous Jews, and Jewish Ritual Objects.

- Examples of 9th–10th grade offerings: America: The American Jewish Experience, The Bible for the Clueless but Curious, The Biblical Narrative; Discovering Judaism through the Internet, Famous Jews in History, and Girl Talk (for girls only).
- Examples of 11th–12th grade offerings: Back to the Basics, The Chosen People: Chosen for What?, The Choreography of Prayer, History of Jews in Hartford, Interfaith Dating and Interfaith Marriage: Are They Still a Problem and Should They Be?, and Jewish Activism.
- Examples of 9th–12th grade offerings: Beit Midrash Yachad Style, Edible Jewish Life Cycle, The Hagadah, Hebrew, and Israel.
- All 12th graders register for a Senior Seminar course during spring semester, in which they plan their graduation ceremony and reflect upon their Jewish educational experience.

Informal/Co-Curricular:

- Sunday Chavurah programming: The Sunday Chavurah programming, which combines participatory learning with text-study, is for students who are not able to register for weekday Yachad programming. Most programming takes place from 1–5 pm, and is based upon a model of field trip travel to local synagogues, cultural centers, and community institutions. Examples include: Kristalnacht at the Charter Oak Cultural Center, Chanukah Party with the Jewish Association for Community Living, Business Ethics at the Mall, Seder at the Hughes Convalescent and Rehabilitation Center, and New York Trip.
- Yachad offers a joint JCC/Yachad Membership program with the local Jewish Community Center. Students are given one social action program and one other program a month to choose from, as well as a full array of JCC youth programs. In order to qualify for the program, students must do a minimum of four JCC programs and four Yachad programs during the course of the year.
- Leadership Programs: Yachad offers two leadership programs, the Machon Jewish Leadership Training Institute (a two-year course of study to develop educational leadership skills) and the Teen Leadership and Tzedakah Institute: Building Tomorrow's Philanthropic Leaders (to develop a habit of "Jewish Citizenship" and life long giving through applied Jewish ethics, community leadership, and tzedakah).
- The Mitzvah Corps, T.A.M.I.D. (Teens Actively Making Incredible Differences) meets regularly for social service events.
- Students also have the opportunity to participate in the following: Confirmation retreat; Dance Troupe; Choir; Panim el Panim trip to Washington, DC; and Mifgashim: The Israeli-American Teen Experience Program.
- Yachad students are encouraged to affiliate with their synagogue youth groups, in order to foster a connection with their individual congregations and to counter congregations' perception that they have "lost" their students to Yachad.

Faculty:

Number:

Approximately 30 teachers, which allows for a 10:1 teacher-student ratio

Qualifications:

The school seeks to hire teachers that "have a fund of knowledge" and demonstrate that they possess the ability to forge personal connections with students. The school also seeks to hire local rabbis as teachers, both so that the congregations will have a greater investment in the program and to give students an opportunity to have "face time" with their rabbi on a consistent basis. Additionally, a Reform rabbi teaches a Confirmation class at Yachad, so that he will not have to take the students away for a year to prepare them for Confirmation. To maintain their cross-

	denominational student body, Yachad employs teachers from across the religious spectrum (Conservative, Chabad, Reform, etc.).
<i>Auspices and Governance:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yachad is an autonomous, federation-funded agency (not under the auspices of the BJE). • Yachad maintains its own board of directors and budget. • Yachad does not view its program as in competition with other program; rather, it encourages the students to affiliate with other organizations such as youth groups and the JCC, with the hopes that the community will in turn reach out to Yachad. • The school also tries to make students aware of other community programs through sponsorship of a summer activities fair.
<i>Budget:</i>	<p>Overall Budget: \$230,000</p> <p>Income Sources: Federation Allocation: \$118; Tuition Income: \$50 registration fee, \$440 yearly tuition; Fundraising: \$20,000; Endowment Disbursement: \$5,000; Other grants: \$2,000.</p> <p>Student Tuition: \$440 for Monday or Wednesday program or Sunday Chavurah. There are also fees in addition to tuition for some of the specialized programs. Some synagogues offer partial reimbursement for Yachad tuition; these arrangements are made between families and their synagogues.</p>
<i>Recruitment and Retention:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting 7th graders within congregational schools: 95% of incoming students were affiliated/attended congregational schools in 7th grade. • Creating a “buzz” around the school: Students are great recruiters for the school, as they “talk up” the program. Yachad implements incentive programs, such as giving movie tickets to students if they get friends to register. • Constant contact with parents and students: Continuous communication with parents and students is a necessary tool for retention. In the fall, the principal calls all non-returning students, and tries to meet with parents of these students. • Appealing to a wide variety of students from diverse backgrounds: The principal “casts a wide net” in recruiting, by allowing students with diverse needs and interests. The school attempts to create a “culture of respect” and cultivates an attitude of derech eretz for varied perspectives. For example, students are not required to cover their heads, but if they are in a class where the teacher asks them to do it and they do not feel comfortable doing so, they are able to choose a different class.
<i>Challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attrition: A main challenge is how to attract more students and increase enrollment. Attrition does occur between 10th and 11th grades (in part due to completion of Confirmation requirements in the Reform synagogues) and at other points. In response to survey questions, students noted that they leave the school because they “don’t have time.” • Geographic challenges: There are challenges in a geographically wide area. Many families are moving out to the Valley area (Avon, Simsbury). The administration is considering how to retain these students; they recognize that for many of their students, the power of the program is in studying with 140 students, as opposed to a much smaller number that would attend a neighboring synagogue school. • The administration would like to see more aggressive student-to-student recruitment.

- Planning course offerings: The principal cannot add a course to the schedule unless she can assure that the class will appeal to students, and that there will be sufficient registration to carry forward with the course.
- The school would like to be able to hire more teachers, but it needs to increase student enrollment in order to do so.
- A big challenge is that the program only meets once a week for 1 hour, 40 minutes. While this time allotment allows students to receive a “taste” of Judaism, there are limitations to the amount of academically serious programming that can be offered. The school is currently considering the possibility of offering an optional smaller Sunday morning component that students might attend “by invitation.” In addition, they are creating more specialty programs or “institutes” that require a more serious commitment and involve students in an intensive study experience. To date, these include: Youth Philanthropy: Tzedakah and Leadership Institute, Machon Leadership Institute, and David Project: Israel Advocacy.

Contact:

Audrey Lichter, Director
(860) 236-5611

Yachad: The Sacramento Jewish Community High School Program

ID Information:	Yachad 2351 Wyda Way, Sacramento, CA 95825 Tel: (916) 486-0906 • Fax: (916) 486-0816 • Website: www.jewishsacramento.org
Grades:	8th through 12th
Enrollment:	Approximately 275 students from Sacramento Valley and the Sierra Foothills area. Most are affiliated with one of the participating synagogues; however, unaffiliated students are also encouraged to attend.
Program Description/Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yachad was conceived with the joint effort of all Sacramento County, El Dorado County, and Yolo County synagogues and the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region. • Five synagogues have participated in the program: Temple Or Rishon, Congregation Beth Shalom, Congregation B'nai Israel, Mosaic Law Congregation, and Knesset Israel Torah. • Yachad began in September 2004 in place of the existing post-b'nai mitzvah educational programs at each of the participating synagogues. • Yachad has borrowed from the Midrasha branches in San Francisco's East Bay area as a general model and guide for how to plan the logistics of the High School. • Yachad provides Jewish youth with a variety of coursework in the areas of: Language, Literature, and Writing; Humanities; Religious Studies; Leadership; and Israel. • Students entering the program in the 8th grade and continuing through the 10th grade qualify for confirmation in all of the participating congregations. Students who continue 8th grade through 12th grade and meet minimum requirements of attendance, participation, and coursework earn certificates of graduation. Students can also enter the program and take classes for their own purposes.
Meeting Times:	Wednesday nights, from 6 to 8:40 pm
Yearly School Calendar:	27 sessions, from October (depending upon the High Holiday calendar) through the second week of May
Daily School Schedule:	Dinner is served on a drop-in basis from 6 to 6:45 p.m. Following dinner, there are two 50-minute classes with a 20-minute break in-between.
Curricular Content:	<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously, students took two year-long classes, a grade-level core class during the first period, and an elective during the second period. Each synagogue's Confirmation class was taught by that synagogue's rabbi as part of Yachad's 10th grade program. • The new structure for 2006–2007 allows students to choose between year-long (25 week), semester-long (12–13 week), and quarterly (6–7 week) classes. The first session of the year focuses on school-wide events and the last session is a celebration of student achievements, promotion, and graduation ceremonies. • All of the new courses fall under the following five courses of study: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language, Literature, and Writing: courses include Hebrew Ulpan (conversational Hebrew) and Jewish Reading Circle (a book club for avid readers to discuss Jewish literature). The wish-list of other classes includes Yiddish language classes and a creative writing class.

2. Humanities: courses include Klezmer Instrumental Band (beginning to advanced musicians), Jewish Youth Orchestra (intermediate to advanced musicians), and Art (two classes every night that rotate quarterly and focus on teaching techniques and various mediums such as working with clay or oil on canvass).
3. Leadership: courses include Leadership (a weekly course that establishes the first student governing body, whose purpose is to build a sense of community and improve the school climate through activities held during the break, during dinner, and for special occasions), Social Action (limited to 8th and 9th graders, in this course students research and choose three areas of focus from state-wide and local issues and implement a plan of social action in the greater Sacramento community), and Panim (limited to 10th, 11th, and 12th graders, this course, joining with the J.C.I. national program as a pilot, focuses on global issues, culminating in local and national social action).
4. Israel: courses include The Sociology of Israel (teaches the history of Israel through discussing different current events) and History (B.C.E.). Courses being developed include a class built from the book "Myths and Facts" by Bard, Israeli Folk Dancing, and Krav Maga (Israeli self-defense).
5. Religious Studies: courses include Daily Parshat (a discussion-based quarterly class open to all grades), and Confirmation class (limited to 10th grade, there are currently five sections taught by each of the five participating congregations' Rabbis, who have complete control over the course outline and instruction).

Informal:

Informal activities, such as art, music, social action, and the Panim el Panim program, are incorporated into the formal curriculum.

Faculty:

Number:

11 teachers plus the five Rabbis of the participating synagogues

Qualifications:

All teachers have at least three years of college study. Advanced Jewish Studies are preferred. All are knowledgeable in the area of their specific courses (e.g. art education/artist, music education/musician, history teacher, etc.).

Courses are taught offered with the understanding that students "vote with their feet." The maximum class size is 25 and the minimum is 10–12, based on budgetary constraints. Risk is taken to offer new classes with fewer than 10 students on a case by case basis. If there are not enough students signed up to take a class, the school cannot justify hiring the teacher.

Auspices and Governance:

- The coordinator is a member of SAJE (Sacramento Area Jewish Educators), which is comprised of the educators of the area congregations. SAJE meets monthly.
- Advisory Committees (Parent Advisory Committee, Student Advisory Committee) meet monthly to provide updates and gather input and ideas.
- The Community Advisory Committee, comprised of members and leaders of the Sacramento Jewish Federation, the local congregations, and one non-affiliated Jew, provides direction through policy development and fiduciary oversight. The committee approves the budget, hiring of employees, field trips, scholarships, and financial aid. This structure needs a lot of work and is currently evolving.
- Student Governance: A Leadership class is offered as a year long course. Five students from each of the five grade levels are selected by the director to join the class. A school-wide election is held by the leadership class to elect its

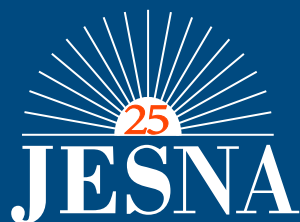
	<p>officers (who are members of the class): president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The role of the teacher is to set the expectations for delivery and execution of programs and activities that build school community and improve school climate. The teacher approves the appointment of all leadership committee chairs, ratifies the budget, and audits student performance. The students do the rest. This is new to Yachad and will require a lot of work.</p>
Budget:	<p>Overall Budget:</p> <p>The 2006–2007 proposed budget is based upon enrollment of 225 students attending 27 sessions with 10 paid teachers, two paid staff, and two contracting professionals. Anticipated tuition income is \$73,250.</p> <p>Income Sources:</p> <p>Tuition, partnerships, and possibly some grants. There is also fundraising by the director, and the students fundraise for their leadership activities.</p> <p>Student Tuition:</p> <p>\$325</p>
Recruitment and Retention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are recruited from area congregations at the beginning of their b’nai mitzvah class in late 6th grade. They will be formally invited by student emissaries at their bar/bat mitzvah celebrations, and Yachad is considering giving them a scholarship to partially fund their 8th grade year. • Making classes relevant and meeting student needs is an absolute necessity to meet recruitment and retention expectations. Unique and interesting classes are being designed and will continue to evolve over the years to keep youth engaged in continued Jewish education. • Parents typically require 8th through 10th graders to attend Yachad and complete their Confirmation. Eleventh and 12th graders are not usually prompted to attend by their parents, and the challenge is to engage them. The intent is to offer courses of study that either provide these upperclassmen the opportunity to study a subject/topic that greatly interests them, or provide them with something impressive to put on their college application and resume. Participation in Leadership, the Social Action class, and/or Panim provides students with the opportunity to run for office, do something substantial for the community, and build their resume/application. • Students who wish to work as a paid teacher’s aide in an area congregation can take a class (Madrichim) that prepares them for the work and provides them with the necessary credentials. This class is still being looked at by the community and the future of the class is yet to be determined.
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting students to make the commitment to further their Jewish education. • Getting parents to invest in their child’s continued Jewish education. • Reaching unaffiliated Jews throughout the region. • Balancing the expectations of the established Jewish community with the needs of the inexperienced and divested Jews of the community.
Contact:	<p>Michelle Masoner, Director (916) 486–0906 Ext. 302 mmasoner@jewishsac.org</p>

Appendix C: Profiles of Successful Community High Schools

In response to numerous requests of JESNA's Center for Excellence in Congregational Education for information about community high schools, qualitative interviews were conducted with principals of five schools. Leaders in the field identified these schools as successful in building and maintaining curriculum and programming. The purpose of these interviews was to solicit the principals' understanding of factors that enable their schools to recruit and retain students. The principals also shared their recruitment and promotional materials, as well as course catalogues and parent/student handbooks. Dr. Shira Epstein created cases studies of these schools.

- **Hebrew College's Prozdor Hebrew High School** includes 7th–12th grades. 70 synagogues participate in this interdenominational collaboration; unaffiliated students are also welcome. 135 students are day school graduates or former day school students. Prozdor operates with a branch system: the school serves 55 congregations in 60 towns; students study at their area branch for two hours during the week, and join together for four hours of study at the main Prozdor campus on Sundays. Prozdor houses branch locations at Conservative congregations in Cambridge, Canton, Lexington, Marblehead, Natick, and Needham.
- **Jewish Community High School of Gratz College** serves approximately 1,000 students through academic programs at 12 branch locations in and around Philadelphia. While the high school division of Gratz was developed in the 1930s, JCHS dates back to the 1980s, when the BJE consolidated several local Hebrew high school programs. In addition to substantive academic programming, JCHS offers: Service Learning and Leadership Institute, Special Needs Programs, and Community Teaching Certificates.
- **Los Angeles Jewish High School** operates under the auspices of the Conservative Movement. The school combines weekday study at eight branch locations with Sunday morning study at Los Angeles Pierce College. 75% of the student body belongs to Conservative congregations; the remaining students are members of other congregations, or are students from non-affiliated households.
- **Midrasha in Berkeley** is one of four midrashot that are attached programmatically. The school serves grades 8–12. It is open to affiliated and non-affiliated families. Kashrut and Shabbat are observed at all school programs and activities. Students need not have previous religious school experience to enroll. Each grade level has a common “core hour” of studies, and the curriculum is supplemented by elective courses.
- **Yachad (Greater Hartford Jewish Community High School)** serves about 300 8th–12th graders. Yachad was formed as a merger of two distinct learning programs: Midrasha, which met two to three days a week, and Beit Noar, which was less of a time commitment.
- **Yachad: The Sacramento Jewish Community High School Program** is a supplementary Jewish high school (grades 8–12), which is a joint effort of area synagogues and the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region. Yachad meets for two hours each week, during which students take one “core class” and one elective.





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