

School Development  
and  
Community Integration

2.12.03

**Barry Dym, Ph.D**  
**WorkWise Research and Consulting**

# School Development and Community Integration

## Introduction

In January of 2002, PEJE commissioned a Community Integration Study to identify the processes by which new day schools are integrated into their larger Jewish community contexts, particularly within the networks of Jewish educational institutions. With some regularity, the introduction of new schools has created, heightened, or gotten caught up in tensions within their communities. Wishing to minimize community disruption and optimize the development of new schools, PEJE commissioned WorkWise Research and Consulting to identify the characteristics of new day schools, local communities, and PEJE activities that either facilitate or hamper successful community acceptance and engagement.

A research team of Barry Dym, Ph.D., President, WorkWise Research and Consulting; Francine Jacobs, Ed.D., Associate Professor at Tufts University; and Marcia Jacobs, Ph.D., an independent consultant, conducted this exploratory study in four communities. The research questions that organized that report were as follows:

- What was the organization of Jewish communal life in each location before the introduction of the new day school?
- To what extent were various community members' interests and concerns elicited and included in the planning of these new efforts?
- Which constituencies appear satisfied with the new effort and which do not? What factors appear to differentiate between these two groups?
- To what extent has the relative acceptance of new day schools changed over time within these communities? What factors appear related to this process?
- How hopeful are community members that this situation will be resolved, and what kinds of help, if any, might PEJE offer?

Originally, we had also hoped to identify the developmental course of community integration, but, with the amount of data we had, believed we could only speculate about that course. Yet a stage by stage description of integration has several advantages that a general description of social forces does not. First, it is compelling; people will attend to it. Second, it has heuristic value: people will engage with it in practical conversation to enlighten their own, particular challenges. Third, people identify with its story-like quality, its distillation of complex experiences into a relatively simple pattern. Fourth, it provides a map; people can locate themselves on the map: "Here is where our school is on its journey to maturity." Fifth, the stage by stage description provides a ready

platform for offering advice: during the initial phases of Conception and Initial Launch, for example, it is common to feel isolated and it is strategically useful to conduct a broad-based 'due diligence' to determine how one's new school would fit into the general educational context of one's community.

So, in September of 2002, PEJE commissioned WorkWise Research and Consulting to conduct a second study, this time to verify and, if possible, to elaborate on the speculative developmental course we described in the first study.

## **Study Methodology**

Site selection. For the first study, the PEJE staff chose four communities to serve as the study sites: Philadelphia, Columbus, Chicago, and Phoenix. These Jewish communities were selected because they presented considerable strength, opportunities, and challenges to the development of local day school networks. They also provided some diversity in their size, location, and Jewish demographics. In addition to these four sites, Boston served as a "training ground" for the CIS team. The research protocol was refined during a preliminary set of interviews conducted in Boston in January, 2002; observations from these initial interviews figure into our overall findings.

For the second study, we reviewed the findings of the first with an eye to data that would illuminate the developmental course of community integration, re-contacted informants in some of the initial sites, and added Toronto, St. Louis and Palo Alto. In addition, we conducted informal interviews with informants from several other cities, such as Boca Raton.

Data sources. Key informant interviews with knowledgeable individuals in each city, representing a cross-section of day school/Jewish community constituents, comprised the primary source of data. Although we relied heavily on recommendations from the PEJE staff in selecting our sample, we sought out others in each community when a key constituency (for example, pulpit rabbis) was not represented in the PEJE list. Among the types of people interviewed were day school principals, madrikhim associated with schools in the site cities, community lay leaders, Jewish communal professionals, parent members of school Advisory Boards, pulpit rabbis, and donors. In addition, we spoke with several national leaders in Jewish education, primarily to provide a broader context for the issues we found in the individual communities. For both the first and second studies, a total of 96 formal interviews were conducted.

The PEJE staff working with schools in these sites were also interviewed, both formally and informally, several times during this period. During the first study, we presented our emerging findings to them at a mid-way point in the project to elicit feedback on the progress and direction of the study. In the discussions that followed these presentations partially reshaped the questions we finally sought to answer. For the second study, there was one, informal midpoint presentation.

In addition to these interview data, we reviewed extant PEJE documents and other available material on the day schools, and the Jewish communities more generally, in these sites. A limited amount of general literature about the current state of Jewish education, and the development and operation of day schools, was also reviewed.

Data collection and analysis methods. Data collection for the first study occurred from January, 2002, through April, 2002. For the second study, data collection took place during October and November, 2002. PEJE staff made initial contact with some informants, introducing us and offering both the project rationale and an implicit “stamp of approval” for the study. The team member who was to be conducting the interviews in each site then contacted the informants and scheduled interviews. Most interviews transpired in person, during a two- to three-day site visit, although in several instances it was necessary to conduct telephone interviews.

Approximately half the interviews during the first study were tape-recorded, and extensive hand-written notes were taken during the others. The relevant material on the tapes was transferred into written form soon after those interviews were completed. The data from each interview was first organized by question, and then by theme (for example, the role of the Jewish Federation) across questions, as they emerged. After analyzing each interview in this fashion, all the interviews from a single city were compared, to identify patterns and highlight differences across them. Once these “within city” comparisons were completed, the team undertook “cross-city” comparisons, looking for consistencies and divergences in the core areas of interest. The final analytic step was to attempt to explain these similarities and differences, with reference to particular characteristics of the day schools, the key “players” in the integration process, the Jewish communities, and/or the cities themselves. Our primary intention was to understand process of integrating a new day school into an existing day school and general institutional network, and the developmental course that individual schools take – rather than assessing the particulars of what transpired in each city.

Maintaining confidentiality. To the maximum extent possible, we have tried to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of our informants. In this report, then, when we have used quotes to exemplify particular points, we have chosen the ones that are likely to preserve the anonymity of the source. We also have respected informants’ desire to keep certain statements “off the record.” However, since many of our informants’ views are known to PEJE staff, and their circumstances are idiosyncratic and therefore recognizable, this is not always possible.

However carefully we have tried to maintain as standard a data collection procedure as possible, drawing anything other than tentative conclusions on these issues from such a small sample of communities would be unwarranted.

## **Theoretical Framework**

For this study, I am using a theoretical framework that combines systemic and developmental elements, an approach similar to Uri Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. The basic idea is this: when one studies the development of a child, for example, one looks at how it unfolds through predictable stages, and how its course of development is shaped by the social contexts in which it grows. Those in the environment who are closest generally have the most direct and powerful impact. Think of the family. More distant influences, like extended family, neighborhoods, peers, and key institutions, like schools and synagogues, have a more attenuated but real impact on the shape of the child's character and behavior. To depict this multi-layered process, Bronfenbrenner uses the image of nested dolls, but that is deceptive, since it misses the two directional influence at play. While families effect children, children clearly have a big impact on the lives of parents and siblings. And, whatever relationship parent and child have is often mediated by grandparents, friends, and school teachers. Then, too, the work life of the parents plays a big role in the time, energy, and mood that parents bring to their children. To complicate matters further, these complex interactions continue throughout the life of children and adults. At each stage of an individual's life, he or she is different and the environment is different.

So it is with the development of schools and other organizations. They, too, can be said to have a relatively predictable course, from idea to launch to the helter-skelter days of new organizations, through the first succession crisis and, if they survive, on to more systematic development and professional leadership. And schools, too, are influenced by their environment. In the case of Jewish day schools, for example, the day school network, major communal institutions, such as the Federation, and the availability of financial support, play key roles in their evolving character. These are the close-in influences. The larger, more diffuse Jewish and secular cultural, economic and political conditions also play roles and have their impact. Studies demonstrating rising intermarriage rates, for instance, stimulated the development of PEJE.

Again, it is important to emphasize that influence is multi-directional. While the environment influences the school, so does the school influence the environment. Building new Jewish day schools, for example, is also threatening to existing schools, who worry about competition for limited resources.

In the language of developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, this essential developmental process is one of "assimilation and accommodation." Tensions that are produced when encountering a new phenomenon create disequilibrium; healthy developing entities reorganize their worlds to assimilate, and accommodate to, these new inputs. This gradual transformation creates new structures that, in due course, will be challenged and transformed once again. It is certainly not a smooth, painless process for children, nor is it so for larger systems. Ultimately, however, one arrives at an assessment of "goodness

of fit;” considering the extent to which each party can accommodate, and whether there is a healthy, growth-producing match between them.

## **New schools as developing organizations**

Let’s begin with a description of archetypal organizational development, free of social constraints. Here new schools move from conception to maturity, as though they were unfolding embryos in a largely controlled climate. For heuristic purposes, I will describe six stages—it could be done in 5 or 7. With each stage comes a particular challenge; the resolution of that challenge permits the school to move onto the next stage in a ‘healthy,’ vibrant way. With a child, for example, moving from the first stage of “trust versus mistrust” (Erick Erikson, *Childhood and Society*), there must be a substantial degree of security built in the relationship with a parent. For a school to move from its entrepreneurial beginnings to a more organization, it must institute professional management and decision-making practices.

The reader should understand that the following description is only archetypal, a model, and no individual school follows precisely this course. It is a map of sorts; and maps help one locate oneself as one travels on a long journey. But, as the anthropologist, Gregory Bateson, said so cogently, the map is not the territory. Each school is distinct. Each journey is distinct.

### **Stage 1: The birth of a vision**

#### ***Developmental challenge 1: Clarifying the vision***

*To begin, the challenge is to move from a limited idea to a clear vision, a vision that is compelling enough to move people to the next stage of planning.*

As with most organization, new schools generally begin as an idea, a vision, a yearning in the mind of an individual or small group. In one instance, a parent has a fierce desire to pass on the tradition in which s/he was raised. In another, parents want to give their children what they lacked. In a third, parents want to extend a satisfying pre-school program into the elementary school grades. In a fourth, a parent-educator wanted a more progressive, up-to-date curriculum than is available in the existing day school. In a fifth, people have read about the intermarriage rate and, with mixtures of anxiety and excitement, set out to do their part in preserving the identify and continuity of the Jewish people.

As these “visionaries” continue to dream and to talk with others, their dream takes on increasing reality and urgency. For some, it becomes an obsession. They think about it day and night. It must be realized. They bring others into the conversation and the initial planning.

## **Stage 2: From vision to plan**

### ***Developmental crisis 2: Developing an attractive plan and effective leadership***

*There are two crucial challenges to meet in order to move from idea to concrete plan. First, the vision must be turned into a blue print for future action, from personal discussions to practical plan, and constructed attractively enough to draw families, teachers, administrators, and donors, as well as keeping up the spirits of the founding group. Second, effective leadership must consolidate.*

To launch schools, founders have to translate their visions into concrete plans, then to act on those plans. During this stage, the founders make initial decisions about who they are and build their plan. Some do so in isolation, speaking mostly to themselves, while others continue to expand their knowledge and the circle of participants. The latter group is likely to conduct some kind of feasibility and demographic study to determine, first, whether there is a demand and potential funding for the school and, second, where it should be located. Some perform these activities in informal ways, while other hire professional firms to conduct the studies. In some cases, one or two people do everything, following no orderly process discernible from the outside, and often taking years before they are ready to actually launch a school.

In one city, a founder wanting to start a community high school, talked with everyone, every pulpit rabbis, principals of current elementary schools, and leaders of Jewish communal institutions—virtually anyone who would listen—trying to build support and to develop common ground. Since her main mission was to begin the school, not to infuse it with a particular denominational flavor, her emphasis was support. Since she had financial support, the support of community leaders was uppermost in her agenda. And, with time, hiring a school head capable of bridging denominational divides was critical. His hiring also made the vision real. The first fund-raising success and the hiring of school heads mark vital sub-stages in the concretization of the school development.

Others, steeped in nonprofit and corporate cultures, follow formal planning procedures. One founding group, for instance, formed several committees—on incorporation, finance, philosophy, site selection, and curriculum—and developed sophisticated bylaws, reflecting their knowledge about how to run effective schools. They created a formal rule that only half the board could consist of parents, thus guaranteeing the perspective of those with less immediate needs from the school, and bringing influential, older community members into their orbit. In an effort to avoid the controlling ways of founders—themselves—they decided to change board presidents every two years.

While the latter group met the challenge in the more efficient way, it is important to acknowledge that many less professional founders form serviceably plans and carry their evolving organizations to the next stage. Generally, the style is entrepreneurial and

informal. Roles are not differentiated. People fill in for each other. Action is often helter skelter. Leadership either emerges and broadens in this heady mix of activities or, in the most isolated groups, simply remains in the hands of the initial visionary. Management capability and style begins to evolve through the planning process. Resources are sought without systematic plans and processes. Excitement builds, as do some anxieties based on beginning the real work. Now the idea seems more daunting to some—the launch is at hand—and more feasible to those who are reassured by a plan.

### **Stage 3: Launching a new school**

#### ***Developmental challenge 3: making the school a reality***

*The challenge here is turn the plan into a reality, an operating school, in which classes are conducted, students learn, tuition is paid, other sources of funding are sought, and the preliminary rules of the road are established.*

Initial money has been raised, a school Head has been hired. Incorporation is achieved. Planning and execution take on a new, more urgent reality. The school must be financed. Faculty must be hired, supervised, trained. Curriculum must be found, adapted, and developed. Space must be located—generally rental at this point. And families must be recruited. All of this continues in a somewhat helter skelter manner, with the visionary leader or founding group still doing a great deal of the work.

For some, the move from planning to launch awaits a professional. With less controlling founders, even those with many ideas of their own, the internal construction of the schools are largely left to the professionals. This is because they firmly believe that the success of the school depends on the pros. This was true in Toronto, St. Louis, Phoenix. In a Boston day school, a founder and school head were one and the same.

But the internal ecology of the organization is partly shaped by this dynamic: how much founder and head differentiate roles; how much the roles and personalities complement one another; how much the founder can let go, and so forth.

If the professional, the Head, has been hired, he or she takes on an increasing amount of responsibility, and orderly processes may emerge rapidly. If the school begins without a principal or with an interim principal, the founders take on operating responsibility. Even with principals in place, however, many parent volunteers are reluctant to relinquish control at this exciting moment. Control struggles may emerge and mark the next years of the school's life.

In general, though, volunteers and professionals become teams, filling in for each other, talking constantly. In the absence of established rules and systems, improvisation and creativity are the order of the day.. This is both the most anxious stage—a commitment has been made—and the most exciting. When people look back to the romance of beginnings, often this is what they look back to.



#### **Stage 4: Creating a good sustainable school**

##### ***Developmental Challenge 4: to professionalize management and develop on-going funding sources***

*The challenge is to move from a grassroots or entrepreneurial to a professionally managed organization that is sufficiently funded.*

The majority of start up organizations, nonprofits and corporations, alike, fail within the first few years. It is easier to start than sustain new ideas and new institutions. Now founders and professionals, together, must managing a transition from the idealistic, entrepreneurial beginnings, when everyone seems to do everything, to a stable organizational structure, in which roles are more defined and differentiated, people are held accountable for their performance, structures and processes (eg committees and information systems) are established to support teaching, recruiting, and fund-raising practices, and a supportive culture is built. Perhaps most importantly, management experience is building.

During this period, there is often a struggle between a visionary founder or a group of parents, loath to let go control of the school they so passionately built, and the professional staff. When the Board and the founders are the same group, there is no one to mediate the conflict. When the Board is independent of the visionary founder(s), the Board can and often does mediate. The struggle is often resolved through either leadership transition and/or the development of a more formal strategic plan, with indicators of effectiveness built in. Sometimes the visionary founder is left in place and complemented by professional support. The transition may take place smoothly or with great pain, leaving wounds that resurface later.

#### **Stage 4: Early maturity**

##### ***Developmental challenge 5: managing growth; establishing sustainability***

*After schools are established, they often continue to grow at a rapid rate. At the beginning of this period, management and infrastructure capabilities, as well as sufficient financial resources are limited and need to be developed at speed and with care.*

At this stage, the character of the school has been established, its staff largely in place and expanding. Information and other infrastructure systems have been introduced and consolidated. Essentially, people know where to be and what is expected of them. This is true for both the professional staff and the board, who has, by now, established a committee structure, a tradition of governance and a clearer relationship with the Head. Generally, this is not an altogether stable period. It is a period of considerable growth,

though not so much creating something new as expanding what has been established. For example, more classes and grades are added, requiring more teachers and, subsequently, administrators, and, in some cases, a middle school might be added.

### **Stage 5: Maturity**

#### ***Developmental challenge 5: harvesting what has been wrought***

*The challenge is to get the most out of what people have built: to utilize, enjoy, and celebrate.*

In this stage, the initial goals have been achieved, and people can feel proud. The school has developed a rhythm and functions in an almost automatic way. Routines reign. Relationships built over the years remain fairly steady, some supportive, some that are not, managed by the routine. There is the potential to become bureaucratic, even rigid. This is a time when people may look back, longingly, to the beginnings, with its spirit of adventure, its close relationships, its adrenaline-filled late night meetings. But it may also be a stable, safe place that permits individual teachers, students, and families to thrive, to experiment and learn in safe, sustaining ways.

### **Stage 6: Stability**

#### ***Developmental crisis 6: continuous change and renewal***

*A new and successful organization can move along quite successfully for a number of years, relatively unchallenged either internally or in its “market” niche. In doing so, it often grows a little complacent, does not evaluate and renew itself. In general, this renewal only happens when there is a challenge, from within or from without, such as the loss of students or the threat of a new school being formed.*

There is a tendency for all human systems to grow conservative with time. Bureaucratic tendencies that emerge can harden. Innovation wanes, is even discouraged. Traditions become limitations: “This is how we do it here,” people intone, when faced with requests for change. This applies to curriculum, teacher training, board procedures, marketing, and fund-raising activities, alike.

But some people grow discontent with the ‘old way’ and challenge it, sometimes by leaving and beginning a new school, sometimes by advocating their differences within. These challenges threaten the school. In response to the threat, the school examines itself on some or all of the dimensions that have ossified. When enough people become self-reflective in this way, a period of experiment and new growth often blossoms forth. There is a renewal. And the process of renewal is iterative. If the school lives a long enough life, it will be required with some regularity, either due to external challenge or to regular, intentional self reflection and planning.

## **The Ecology of School Launches: Findings from First Study**

In the introduction, we suggested that new schools do not develop in a vacuum. Rather they evolve within complex communities. These communities both facilitate and hamper a school's efforts to recruit students and teachers and to establish a solid funding base. These activities, in turn, effect the school's ability to meet its developmental challenges. Our first study described these community influences and we would like to summarize them here.

We identified three contextual factors that affect the integration of day schools into their communities. First, there are the characteristics and personality of particular cities, their *zeitgeist* and culture. Like most western regions, for example, Phoenix and Palo Alto, are not crowded with Jewish groups, each with long and proud traditions. Its Jewish citizens often refer to their areas as a frontier and to themselves as pioneers. When thinking of building a new school or any other Jewish institution, they do not feel that they have to carve out a place so much as to settle the land and build a homestead.

Second, there are demographic characteristics. In some cities, like Phoenix, there is a pronounced Jewish migration from the old city center to Scottsdale. Efforts to build new schools in the center city would encounter recruitment problems. In Philadelphia, Jews live in a variety areas that are separated by physical barriers, like rivers, that discourage parents from transporting their children to particular schools. In cities that attract students and businesses, people have left home. Hence, the yearning for community and a sense of belonging can be intense; and the capacity of new schools to provide a focal point for community development can draw people to it, thus providing a powerful positive force in the school's growth.

Third, the organization of Jewish communal institutions vary from city to city. In some, building a new school without consulting with the Federation can cut the school off from funding sources. In other cities, the Federation and the Bureau of Jewish Education are decentralized and lack power. There, founders can build with little fear of interference but also with little expectation of help. In different cities, the degree of denominational cooperation and balkanization varies greatly. Community schools may thrive where there is a history of cooperation. Denominational schools may thrive were the distinctness of synagogues and religious practices is accepted. Toronto, following Canada's multicultural tradition, for example, has thirty-seven day schools, who appear to coexist quite well.

Then, too, over time, these communal institutions change shape and priorities. In San Francisco, until 1990, for example, the Federation had not played a strong educational role and, in fact, were somewhat discouraging about day schools. This is common in regions with older, Reform-oriented Jewish communities, who have strongly favored public schools and being an integral part of the general American community.

Each of the city profiles reveals an idiosyncratic day school network, but in general terms, there has been competition between new and existing schools. When new schools are launched, existing schools generally feel threatened, some mildly, some fearing for their survival. While the threat to scarce resources is real and existing schools have lost students, teachers, and donors to new ones, they also concede that they have also benefited from the competition. Frequently enough, they have reviewed and improved their own curriculum, staffing patterns, and marketing efforts. What is more, the competition forced some schools to clarify their own, core identity. Informants with more distance from direct competition said that the introduction of a new school more often surfaced tensions within the community that already existed, and should have been addressed earlier. They described a complacency when a particular day school is the only one available, and believed that an occasional shake-up is probably constructive to help schools develop an identity and delineate its market niche, both factors which likely strengthen the network in the long run.

Despite a prevalent free market ideology, informants distinguished between “honest competition” with potential beneficial results, and “dishonest competition” in which some schools are lavishly financed without regard for larger community needs. A few schools also seem concerned about what they referred to as a “shell game,” that is, whether the number of day school students is actually increasing, or whether the new schools are simply drawing on the existing pool of day school students. These skeptics, believe that new schools succeed in recruiting new families into the day school network, but wonder about the cost of the additions.

## **Developing schools in community context**

Like the development of organizations, the process by which new schools are integrated into the larger community can also be described as a series of stages. The two developmental courses are related but do not proceed together in a step by step correspondence. In this section, we will describe the integration process and note how it influences, and is influenced by the stages of organization development..

At first glance, there appeared to be multiple courses of community integration. In one city, for example, the introduction of a new school seemed to be extraordinarily well managed, commanded community support from the start, and had encountered almost no resistance to its slow, steady growth. This apparent trajectory we labeled the ‘professionally pathway’. In other cities, the introduction of new day schools appeared to threaten or concern no one. They were isolated, but they grew. This we labeled ‘isolated development.’

The more we looked, the greater variety we saw. There seemed many ways to build a school and to integrate it with the surrounding Jewish community. Each of the schools we studied ‘made it.’ Some did so with less trouble than others. They are exemplary. But the entrepreneurial spirit of new school development is not often married to good management and measured collaboration with others. Many of these entrepreneurs make

up for what they lack in (community) management skills with resilience, determination, and agility. It is as important to note and affirm this developmental diversity as it is to learn the lessons of better management.

Eventually, we did identify a pattern of integration. The apparent diversity of integration styles had common themes. This is what we present below. It is important for readers to understand, however, that schools don't always proceed in exactly this order or pass through this many stages. We have drawn out the stage by stage process in order to shine a light on the complexity of the integration process.

### **Stage 1: We need new day schools; the rising tide lifts all boats**

As PEJE's powerful early success indicates, there is a "market" for new Jewish day schools. The explanation for this receptivity is too complex for the present paper, but three themes bear mentioning. First, there is the matter of intermarriage. According to well-publicized studies, about 50% of American Jews marry outside the faith; in cities like Phoenix, San Francisco, and Palo Alto, the percentages can run as high as 70%. So the specter of dramatic assimilation into Christian America and the loss of Jewish identity—in extremis, the loss of the Jewish people—looms large in contemporary culture. Naturally, solutions do as well; and day schools are seen by many as a way to sustain traditional values practices and, therefore, a hedge against extinction.

The concern with the continuity of the Jewish people and their active engagement in and identification with Jewish institutions is almost universal. Even in communities where the majority of Jews are unaffiliated or where the majority are Reform and have for generations been opposed to day schools, there is some sense of urgency, some increased openness to day schools as at least one strategy to combat complete assimilation. Even those day schools begun by and for 'non-traditional' parents and children—unaffiliated, largely secular, gay, lesbian, radical, whatever—even they are welcomed. There is the hope that these 'non-traditional' Jews will be pulled into the tent and eventually grow more conventionally affiliated.

Probably influenced by the intermarriage anxieties and by a long drift towards secularism among Jews, there has been a shift towards more traditional practice. These shifts are perhaps most visible among the very orthodox and those in the Reform movement. Throughout American cities, a substantial percentage of the current generation who are now parents have less need to distance themselves from their Eastern European predecessors and a greater need for 'spiritual' engagement; and they want this even more so for their children. This is the second theme that seems to form the cultural background to the day school movement and provides greater initial welcome—or lack of opposition—to the formation of new schools.

The third theme is multiculturalism. For a century, the American cultural ideal has been built around the image of the 'melting pot,' in which all of its diverse groups come together into a unique amalgam. But the melting pot has two key flaws. The first is ideological: the melting pot did not really include all the immigrant groups. The

intention has been to become like the majority of the original European American settlers, that is White and Protestant. Over the years, many ‘ethnic’ Americans objected to this expectations. The second flaw is sociological: we have not melted; ethnic and religious groups have maintained their distinctive character. Combining ideological objections and sociological resistance, Americans have increasingly posed an alternative to the ‘melting pot’: a multiculturalism, in which all groups are encouraged to maintain themselves and, in the security of being able to do so, to respect, even celebrate, all the other groups. Canada’s cultural ‘mosaic’ foreshadowed this trend in its southern neighbor.

In multicultural societies, distinct schools for distinct cultural and religious groups come naturally. Toronto, where 34% of Jewish children are enrolled in 37 day schools—including a high school with around 2000 students—may herald the future more than the assimilation that American Jew’s fear. In Toronto, day schools form for all kinds of reasons, related to: various pedagogies (eg Montessori; Heschel); country of origin; denomination. Accustomed to this pluralistic attitude, with its acceptance of difference, it is easier to accept new day schools of any stripe; and that seems to be what is happening.

Against this background, it is not surprising that word of new day schools, no matter how threatening they later become or how unconventional they are appear, is generally welcomed into the Jewish community.

When visionary founders first get the idea of a day school, they talk to a great many people. In some cases, the talk is systematic: founders make a careful round of conversations with communal institution leaders, pulpit rabbis, supplemental school heads, and other schools. They check out their own ideas, look for advice and support. In some cases, the talk is random and not as far ranging. It is rare at this stage for founders to build their ideas in isolation, though some do so. This seems particularly to be the case when the founder has already garnered funding for the venture.

At this conceptual stage, then, new schools meet little opposition, or at least, little overt opposition. Support may range from tepid or guarded to enthusiastic, but support it is. Even those existing educators who feel a hint of anxiety, do not like the response in themselves and feel compelled to take the high ground.

So potential founders find doors open to them for at least two reasons. First: “It may or may not be what I would choose, specifically, but, in general, it’s good for the Jews.” Second: a rising tide lifts all boats. There is a general belief in the Jewish community that new schools increase the consciousness of and desire for schools. They build the general population of Jews who take their religion seriously.

Finally, the general American idea that competition is good seems to pervade the Jewish consciousness. Most people seem to know by now that placing a Burger King next to MacDonald’s is not a threat but is likely to attract more people to the area and help both.

So it is with a Reform or even a community day school forming in the midst of conservative and orthodox schools.

## **Stage 2: Isolation (and connection?)**

Even though there is a good deal of early conversation, virtually all schools—or founders of schools—begin in a more or less isolated position, or with the experience of isolation. They feel that the burden is on their shoulders. Others may welcome their idea but few if any provide more than advice and good wishes. And surely no one is there to listen or help at two in the morning, when one is awake with odd combinations of anxiety and hope, spinning one plan after another to raise money, gain support, find allies, or just spinning in circles.

As the schools move from conception to serious efforts to gain the resources necessary to launch a real school, most founders pull in. They grow consumed with their work. They pay less attention to those they had consulted with. And these advisors and well wishers may pull back, too. So the entrepreneurial efforts of the founders grow isolated.

There are various types of isolation. While reading the following sketches, it is important to note that some schools share qualities of more than one. For example, an underfunded grassroots organization may receive a large infusion of funding, shifting the experience of isolation: from not reaching the people with access to power and funding, the establishment, to not being concerned about the establishment.

### The early grassroots journey: outsiders

The grassroots journey is the most common. A founder begins with an idea for a school and a great deal of determination. The determination may be born of a desire to provide one's children a missed opportunity—"If only there had been a day school when I was growing up"—or to make up for a painful experience—"I cared about keeping Shabbat, about learning, about...but there was no one to do that with; I was lonely and I remained ignorant." It may stem from a desire to form a Jewish community, with the knowledge that it can be built around a school. Or it may represent a struggle against general cultural assimilation, a wish to do one's part. We have observed Jewish day schools emerging among individuals with these kind of motives in Boston and Toronto, Chicago, Columbus, and Phoenix, and we have heard comparable stories from many other places.

Generally, founders are passionate, driven in their quest, insistent on success. They don't simply propose an idea and hope that others will take it up. Rather, they promise themselves that they will see their dream realized. They are not compromising people. They make decisions before research and planning. They reach out but are generally ill positioned to reach those who can materially support them. Grassroots organizations rarely originate in the world of movers and shakers. They do not have ready connections or easy rapport with the moneyed classes that may eventually provide support.

To outsiders, these lonely travelers may seem a little rough and more than a little obsessed. They may seem to lack perspective, humor, even friendliness, so set are they on their task. Friends and established institutions—schools, Federations, Bureaus of Jewish Education—offer advice and try to lend perspective. After all, they have seen other schools begin and fail or begin and take a long time to become established. What is more, they have a large view; they see and represent, or believe they see and represent the whole Jewish community. But their advice is often ignored. Founders are in a rush. It is not in their nature to slow down, to plan, to gradually build up allies and credibility.

At this stage, their passion and rush do not appear to be a big problem for the educational and communal professionals and established lay leaders. Institutional leaders may wish grassroots leaders to be different, but they have seen such leaders before and, as we have said, they would rather the leaders succeed than grow timid. So they continue to say supportive things and, in general, to withhold concrete support. Some, like the Federations, enhance some of the early isolation through clearly formulated policies: the schools must prove themselves, must earn later support by demonstrating they have filled a need and learned to operate effectively. Some will give of their time and advice—in their view, time and again. Others just watch.

Years later, when schools are established, both the professionals and the community people the founders encounter along the way will tend to romanticize this period. They may exaggerate their accessibility, their generosity. In fact, some of these stories seem to romanticize in much the same ways that founders, themselves, look back through misty eyes to these adventuresome days.

#### The early grassroots journey: insiders

There are numbers of communities in which ‘insiders,’ people with knowledge about Jewish communal institutions and sources of funding, want to begin schools. These savvy entrepreneurs are not isolated from advice, nor excluded from the halls of power. And they do not behave in ways that are alienating to the establishment. But many in the community may still oppose them actively or passively, as was the case of pulpit rabbis in one, Midwestern city. Theirs was a ‘classical’ reform opposition to day schools, believing such schools would detract from public schools and reproduce the segregation of Jews that had taken so long to eliminate.

But these inside entrepreneurs are every bit as determined as the grassroots ‘outsiders,’ and as likely as their inexperienced brethren to ignore Federation positions and demographic studies. They are passionate crusaders for a cause they believe in very much—more, for the moment, than anyone else. This is what isolates them. As they set their course, they, too, are alone with their dream.

While one would expect these insiders to shorten the journey of new school development, that does not seem to be the case. The road from conception to launch can take them up to five years. Their efforts to line up support may begin with a clearer-eyed idea of what it takes, but, even for them, support appears and disappears with maddening regularity.



Funding they think they can count on must await the processing of wills, bureaucratic decisions, or the whims and business cycles of potential donors. While one contribution may lead to another, it may not—at least, not as immediately as expected. In other words, others may be friendly and supportive but they don't share the founder's sense of urgency, his or her timetable. So the insider founder, who is increasingly concerned with planning and wishing to start the hiring process, can only wait, while others watch.

### Beginning with early funding

Some schools begin with funding. Others are infused with funding that transforms their modest operations. A wealthy donor or local foundation may decide s/he wants to begin a school or joins in a passionate entrepreneur's vision. An external funder, like PEJE, may decide to support a new school's efforts, in spite of its failure to prove its viability, and without determining how it fits with local institutions and culture.

Some of these schools are isolated because they can be. They don't need the help of others, or don't think they do. They don't have to conduct feasibility and demographic surveys to determine if there is a 'market' to support their schools. They don't have to compromise about curriculum and observance. They don't have to worry about threatening or alienating others in the Jewish educational or communal world. They simply set up shop. And they don't reach out very much.

This, then, is another form of isolation. One can argue that it is chosen, but, in a way, no more chosen than the entrepreneurial outsider who is determined to realize a very individual vision.

Unless the funder is willing to support the new school indefinitely, however, this kind of isolation can become as challenging as any other. In fact, the early, unencumbered funding may blind the school to the need to work hard for community support, to have as one of its goals the integration into the larger Jewish community. From our brief study, in fact, it appears that such early funding slows the process of integration.

### **Stage 3: Threat and anxiety**

It should come as no surprise that the introduction of a new school would threaten existing schools and other Jewish institutions. Even the contemplation of a school launch, as it makes its way around the informational and rumor network can threaten others. There are both real and imagined reasons for this experience.

In almost all cases, fears revolve around resource scarcity: there aren't enough children and families to go around; there isn't enough money, enough serious donors to fund yet another school; there aren't enough educational materials and qualified teachers. After all, there is a national crisis around the scarcity of teachers.

Most schools struggle, themselves, around issues of funding, faculty, and recruitment. A fair number experience themselves as either in or near a fight to survive. With their own existence on the line, any competition seems dangerous. Often it is. Take, for example, a Schechter school in a predominantly Reform community. It is likely that some percentage of the Schechter families are Reform—imagine 20-25%. When the Schechter school was the only game in town, it could feel relatively secure in the loyalty of this group. The launch of a new, Reform, day school, doesn't just threaten, it makes school transfers likely. Such transfers mean fewer students and decreased fund raising potential.

Existing schools are likely to see their world as a 'zero sum game,' in which more for another means less for them, instead of holding a more expansive view, in which the increasing currency of day schools will, in the long run, benefit them. Thus initial optimism—"a rising tide lifts all boats"—yields to a more deeply felt pessimism.

Certain conditions lend themselves to this kind of thinking. Small communities, for example, generally do have fewer resources and less ability to attract and retain educational resources from the outside. Newer or less institutionally mature Jewish communities, like Phoenix, Boca Rotan, Las Vegas, and the East Bay in San Francisco share similar concerns. Declining denominational populations can also pose a threat. In St. Louis, for example, the Conservative community is gradually declining, thus providing an increasingly small resource pool, while the Reform community is large and largely untapped for day schools. Yet the increasing currency of Jewish observance among the Reform groups and the increasing preference for private schools, promises to transform Reform day school initiatives into significant competition.

The threat is particularly experienced by contiguous groups. Orthodox and Conservative groups, for example, may be threatened by community schools. Conservative schools may be threatened by Reform schools. On the other hand, Orthodox groups do not tend to be threatened by the launch of a Reform day school. It won't draw from their population. So it is easy to welcome the newcomers and to harbor some faint hope that greater familiarity with Judaism may eventually lead at least a small portion of Reform day students to the Orthodox way.

While the reasons for feeling threatened are often obvious—the threat to scarce resources—this is not always the case. For example, the potential loss of one segment of students can change the nature of a school. If, for instance, a community school, attracts the more liberal students and families from an Orthodox school, that may leave the school with a greater predominance of conservative families, which means that the conservative families now have a better chance of setting the tone of the school. If a community school or a modern Orthodox school attracts teachers, a traditional Orthodox school may be forced to recruit from the ultra orthodox community, who are more than willing to travel from the East coast, in their efforts to proselytize. In general, the loss of one group can tip the scales of power, control, culture, observance, and pedagogy within a school and a school community.

Some anxiety, however, does not flow from real and immediate threats. It is undirected, free floating, the fear of the unknown or the outsider. These free floating anxieties readily attach to “real” threats, like the ones we have described above, thus providing a kind of disguise; but they also have an irrational quality that makes them hard to address. When cooler heads offer perspective or argue that the threat is less than it seems, that it may help in the long run, they make almost no headway with this free floating anxiety. No sooner does the argument show ways to resolve one problem—say a teacher shortage—than the anxiety attaches to another problem. This type of migration from problem to problem then becomes frustrating to the problem solvers, who can become patronizing or harsh, thus creating a polarized situation within community-wide institutions and existing schools.

The anxiety of existing schools does not take place in a vacuum. As we suggested, resource and demographic factors play a role. So does the behavior of the new school. If they have conducted and made public demographic research, for example, indicating there is a place for them, a clear niche that is essentially separate from the space carved out by existing schools, then anxiety can decrease. If the new schools are particularly solicitous of the existing schools, pulpit rabbis, and communal institutions, asking their advice, perhaps adapting themselves to the needs of the whole community, then the threat is decreased.

If the new schools play by the community’s “rules,” they are likely to reduce threat, exclusion, alienation. Toronto offers an excellent illustration of this principle. At the risk of oversimplifying a tremendously complex situation, the Toronto Federation, representing a large part of the Toronto community, has rules of engagement and a somewhat proprietary attitude for new schools. The Downtown Jewish Day School (DJDS), anti-establishment in its origins, ignored the Federation, as did PEJE, an outsider, in its initial support. This raised suspicions about DJDS that slowed its integration into the community and, therefore, its ability to raise local funding.

It appears that the infusion of large sums of money that are independent of community ‘regulation,’ generally poses a threat to existing schools. We see this in Philadelphia, among other places. Not only does the independence of this funding threaten others, it can blind schools to the long term need for a broader base of support. As such support becomes necessary, members of the larger community, who had been poorly informed and consulted, are less inclined to help. This raises anxiety and anger within the newer school, making its interaction with the larger community more defensive, perhaps more entitled (“You ought to help us”), and more blaming. And this, in turn, inflames the larger community’s mistrust. A vicious cycle has been created.

To conclude this section, it is important to note two qualities of Stage 3. First, most of the anxiety is kept in or kept within strict bounds. In general, existing schools and other Jewish institutional players discipline themselves, keep a low profile, and, much more often than not, continue to take the high ground: day schools are good; a rising tide lifts all boats.

Second, this stage can last a long time, creating the impression that a new school has made an entirely smooth entry into the Jewish community. The reason for the delay is that some new schools grow very slowly. For an extended period, they do not encroach on the resources of the older schools. They may even teeter in that dangerous zone, where their very existence is questionable. So a wait and see attitude on the part of existing, stable schools makes a great deal of sense. This seems to have been the pattern, for example, in Milwaukee, and may well describe events in St. Louis.

#### **Stage 4: No Problem; Good riddance to trouble makers**

After the initial anxiety, existing schools and other institutional players, try to gain perspective and pull themselves together. Among other things, they have to reassure their own constituency—parents, teachers, supporters, the broader Jewish community—that they will be fine. They need to create a stable image in order to best continue recruiting students, staffing and funding the school. What is more, expressions of anxiety and competition can be embarrassing, fueling the desire to regain the moral high ground of supporting new schools and tending to one's own gardens. Privately, school Heads and Board members may continue to grumble but, in public, they don more optimistic garb.

Some schools take these optimistic attitudes to an extreme, virtually refusing to acknowledge the existence of the new school, and certainly refusing to adapt their own methods to deal with the imminent competition. They may assume a 'stiff upper lip,' indifference, or arrogant disregard. These attitudes bespeak inflexibility and insensitivity to the 'market' they live in, which may later come back to haunt them.

As a new school start up becomes a reality, many of those who had initially been threatened may calm down. They have assessed their potential losses and decided that such losses can be tolerated or transformed into gains. Those parents and children who leave for the new school, they reason, may be more trouble than they were worth. They often turn out to be students who had difficulties, beset by behavioral or learning problems, at their old school. The parents may have been very critical of the faculty and school head, raised trouble in Board meetings, acted in intrusive ways in the classroom. At second glance, older schools may express relief, perhaps captured in the phrase, 'good riddance to bad company.'

The new schools act in this way as safety valves, in much the way that private schools of various kinds take care of children who do not fit happily or effectively in public schools. Loss, which originally feels passive—like something done to the existing schools—now seems like an active letting go, which, in turn, permits the older schools to stop trying to be all things to all students and to concentrate on what they do best. This is akin to what corporations call their "core competencies."

Since public statements at this stage tend to emphasize the positive, new schools are relieved. They hope that the battle for public acceptance has been won, and they can

continue their building efforts. But some are also aware that the acceptance may be only a lull. Much of their growth is still to come. They ‘know’ that they intend to draw students and, perhaps, teachers, from other schools; when those kind of intentions are realized, the lull will yield to a storm. Even knowing this, however, they may join older schools in as many programmatic ways as possible—field days, holiday celebrations. An air of partnership appears to be growing, with both parties knowing how tenuous the partnership really is.

Most of the efforts and experiences during this period can be understood in terms of systems regulations. Systems of all kinds work continuously to adapt to their environment, which means changing themselves, even as they try to maintain as stable a character as possible. The adaptive efforts are variously called positive feedback loops and morphogenesis. The efforts to remain the same are negative feedback loops or homeostatis. Schools, like all systems, respond, more or less well, to a threat in the environment—a new school—through a variety of strategies.

Here are three familiar strategies, discussed above:

- Closing boundaries and ignoring the threat
- Reacting a great deal, changing oneself, then having to scurry to return to character
- Slow recognition, slow adaptation.

A fourth strategy is trying to kill the threat. We have learned little about overt negative efforts but have heard hints of efforts to undermine new schools

### **Stage 5: Renewed threat and anxiety**

As the new school grows, it generally does have an impact on contiguous schools. Some teachers leave the older, stable schools for what they see as better teaching opportunities: more contemporary curriculum, more tolerant or more exciting school heads, and more classroom freedom, to name a few. Parents and children switch allegiance. Prominent members of the Jewish community, such as other educators and Federation leaders or pulpit rabbis enroll their children in the new school. Donors provide support. With fringe students leaving (eg Reform families leaving a Schechter school or Conservatives leaving an Orthodox school), the character of the older schools begin to shift. Factions of families grow stronger or weaker, with long term implications for curriculum, and short term prospects of fighting at the Board level. In some cases, the core identity of the school may be threatened.

Since most of these schools struggle to survive, no less thrive, these changes may be experienced as a stampede that will leave them without resources. In the midst of the stampede, it is easy to imagine themselves on a rapid downward slide that will threaten their existence. They grow annoyed, worried, and critical. During this period, there is a great deal of internal conversation, soul searching, and blame within the old schools. The blame is directed towards the new schools, towards the Federations for not protecting

them, and, perhaps most painfully, they blame themselves for not responding more effectively to the new school.

Older schools become more aware of community demographics and geographical shifts: “Why haven’t we prepared?” they say. They note, with dismay, that they had not upgraded their curriculum or faculty training. Believing their constituency was solid, they didn’t think to ‘market’ themselves or to improve their marketing strategy.

If Stage 4 plays out in adaptation and retrenchment, that is a momentarily regained equilibrium for schools and for the educational community, in general, then Stage 5 means an exacerbation of early disequilibrium.

### **Stage 6: Broadening the community anxiety—community disequilibrium**

School staff and boards are rarely quiet about their concerns. Worry and blame are communicated abroad, and become public property. It is a little like referred pain in the body. Other school groups, who were less directly threatened by a new school, may join in sympathetic protest or may shore up their own defenses. Some may be directly enlisted. Some community-wide organizations, like the Federation, may be brought into the fray, which, to an extent, may destabilize them. When enough of the players are protesting or changing at once, there is a general disequilibrium in the educational community.

The larger disequilibrium does not arrive all at once. It has been building and subsiding, building and subsiding from the beginning. Throughout the first five stages, both new and old schools appeal to larger community institutions—Federations and Bureaus of Jewish Education, congregations—to lay leaders of all sorts, and sometimes to national organizations, PEJE among them, to make their case, resolve their difficulties, and find relief.

In cities with strong Federations, the community response can and often is activated early on and may be something to contend with throughout. Chicago, Toronto, and Boston come to mind. But the response may or may not lend itself to stability. In Boston it does. The central institutional players tend to be trusted by a broad spectrum of educators and lay leaders and are known to form bridges among various groups and factions. They serve as stewards of the community and put their particular interests second. They also tend towards a pluralistic outlook, which makes the support of variety, so long as it represented by authentically practicing Jews, very much in keeping with their ideology.

The Toronto Federation is even stronger and more centralized. While it is multicultural in its approach, it has worked out rules, some explicit, some tacit, to which new players must adhere. When a new institution, like the Downtown Jewish Day School, which started on its own, was largely populated by ‘nontraditional’ Jews (eg intermarried, gay and lesbian couples, and those from the old political left), found support from an outsider, PEJE, and did not play by the rules, the Federation and others let it languish before, on

the urging of PEJE and other powerful outsiders, it rescued the DJDS. DJDS was not a real but a symbolic threat to the hegemony of the Toronto way, as championed by the Federation.

The Chicago federation very much has an agenda of its own. When brought into the mix by competing schools, it may contribute more to the disequilibrium than to efforts to bridge differences. In Columbus, Phoenix, San Francisco, and other cities, the Federation has been accused of favoring one school over others, thus becoming more a force of destabilization than stabilization.

As the larger community, including both institutions and individuals, gets involved, many are not close to the action and have second and third hand access to information. Rumors fly, suspicion and sometimes paranoia build. Real and imagined threats to new schools are reported. The 'zero sum game' becomes paramount. Rabbis and other congregation leaders may guard their donor base with particular zeal, as though contributions to the new schools—or the existing schools—would mean less for supplemental schools, capital campaigns, and the like.

This broadening community involvement can have consequences. For example, it is during this stage that members of the larger community, by themselves or in partnership with groups within the new schools, may challenge the competence and control of the founders. We see this process in Columbus, Toronto, and Boca Rotan, among others. The challenge usually focuses on fiscal issues, with management competence being a close second. The challenges may take the form of a bargain: a new, more professional, reasonable leadership in the new school in exchange for financial support.

There is generally good grounds for such challenges. The entrepreneurs and visionaries who launch schools are frequently poor managers. The early isolation does not translate readily into 'capacity building' and infrastructure development within the school and its extended community. Nor does it often create a sustaining financial base for the school.

Here, then, is where the community integration process may play a key role in a school's own trajectory. The reader may recall that the developmental challenge in Stage 4: Creating a Good and Sustainable School. The challenge of that stage is to move from a grassroots or entrepreneurial to a professionally managed organization that is sufficiently funded. In several cases, it is not the founders or the staff that are the engines for this transition but the larger community.

But the focus on leadership succession can also mask a distrust, even a distaste for 'outsiders,' and the desire to install a new leadership that will play by the community—read establishment—rules. We don't mean to suggest anything dark or mean-spirited about these feelings. They are natural. Any human system defines itself as much by saying who it is not as by saying who it is. Outsiders are important stimulants for the consolidation of a group's identity. Still, as natural as this process is, the declarations and analyses of establishment groups cannot be taken as objective or neutral. They have a powerful point of view.

Community efforts to help new and old schools, then, are part of a very complex, very tricky negotiation between what is old and what is new, among many interests groups, many belief systems, many narratives about who is serving the best interests of the Jewish people. All the variables that we identified in the first report—demographic, geographic, cultural, institutional, political—come into play. It is through the successful negotiation of these elements that cultures stabilize themselves. But, at this stage, the negotiation has not yet succeeded. New and old schools don't yet know who will benefit, who will survive. Often, they don't know who is friend and who is foe.

### **State 7: Identity clarification and renewed strength**

As far as we have been able to tell, the threat and disruption catalyzed by the introduction of new schools ends up as a largely positive experience for most existing schools. The threat they feel pressures them to take a hard look at themselves: their teaching methods, their recruitment and marketing strategies, their identity or 'brand.' This tends to be a painful process. Yet almost everyone who has been through it, affirms it. They say that the threat and pressure forced them to say who they are and are not, or to both upgrade and align their teaching methods to that newly clarified identity.

Interestingly, almost everyone uses some version of a free market or social Darwinian vocabulary. The free market idea is that competition forces organizations to hone their own skills. When contrasting themselves to nonprofit organizations, corporations say they are lean and strong because they have been disciplined by the market. It seems a great irony that schools, which are nonprofit organizations, based, in good part on religious principles, should view themselves through such a lens. During the hard times, some even refer to the Darwinian idea that the strong survive while the weak perish. It is a narrative that frightens them yet gives strength and focus, shifting the terms of their ordinary thinking. Instead of being right and good, they are asked to be strong, to fight for what they believe it, and to win.

The new schools are not immune to such thinking and such strengthening processes. We have noted that the stage of maximal disequilibrium often forms a platform to challenge the founding leadership. These challenges require that the new schools not only change leadership but reach compromises about who they are and what they stand for, often moving more towards the established way of doing business in their community.

The succession crisis that follows may provide an occasion to do some systematic planning—either focused around general strategies or around a development plan. Such plans are not part of the earlier, entrepreneurial stage. Putting together strategic plans forces decisions about priorities: how to focus resources to reach clearly defined objectives. Development planning and capital campaigns require succinct statements about the character and vision of an organization. Thus the challenge new schools present to older schools comes back to them.



Clarifications and resolutions reached during planning processes and individual soul searching by school leaders may lead to immediate change: for example, replacing one school Head or Board Chair with another. But more often they unleash lengthy processes that place the schools on a course of change for months and years to come. They may, for instance, appoint a committee to revise curriculum, but that will likely involve conversations with a broad array of stakeholders. A committee to create a new marketing plan will create similar conversations. And these conversations will further the process of change. Again, this process is natural and necessary. According to systems and ecological theory, systems must change, must adapt to their internal and external environment to survive. In effect, they must change to remain the same, that is, to retain their core character.

Schisms within Boards catalyzed by these challenging times may also take time to heal. Take the case of a minority group of students going to another school. This may strengthen one while weakening another board group. The question is how the board can further emphasize the stronger group's agenda without alienating the newly weakened group. The change in board strength, reflecting the different school population, may not show up for a year or so or it may show immediately. In any case, the process of forming a new consensus will take time.

### **Stage 8: New equilibrium or ripples of change**

There appear to be two, relatively distinct patterns that characterize this last stage.

#### *Scenario 1: New Equilibrium.*

With time, individual schools complete the recalibration of their approaches and consolidate changed or changing boards and professional staff. We see this in new curriculum, new 'branding' and marketing techniques, revamped boards of directors, and new fund-raising strategies.

Federation involvement with both the new school and the older ones who brought them into the 'conversation' tends to recede. The new schools are absorbed into the Federation formula. Even in a case like Toronto's DJDS, where disequilibrium was long and painful, school and community stability have been achieved. The new Board Chair and school Head are both happily and productively engaged with larger Jewish communal institutions, who, in turn, have helped find funding for DJDS. The Federation has used the experience to reinforce its general formula for school funding and support and its policies, including its profound commitment to multiculturalism. At the same time, two of its senior members have dedicated substantial time to DJDS and one continues to dedicate attention to PEJE, concretely and symbolically making sure that outside funding and new schools 'understand' the Toronto 'way.' PEJE stands chastened and ready to act more in partnership with Toronto and other local 'rules.' The Canadian "mosaic," as it applies to the Jewish educational community, may have shifted some, but it is very much intact.

## *Scenario 2: Ripples of change*

Sometimes, one change leads to another, which leads to another. As schools adjust to the threats, new ideas emerge. As we have indicated, ideas surface and get played out within the individual schools. But new school launches and the turmoil they catalyze also raise questions for the larger community. This may take the form of demographic studies and large, inclusive planning efforts, which will continue to change the Jewish educational landscape for some time. In addition, specific themes are highlighted during the difficulties. One such theme is the need for middle schools or the need to create a middle school system, either of which would require cooperation among schools or denominations that may not have existed or existed only tenuously beforehand. These creative efforts, too, stimulate ripples of change and, with the ripples, disequilibrium. Phoenix, for example, with the building of the high school, with its need for better feeder schools, and the development of the new campus, seems perched on the edge of just such a destabilizing process.

Finally, the disequilibrating impact of day school launches sometimes reaches into national institutions and consciousness. PEJE, itself, has been trying to adjust its approach: suggesting with increasing urgency and skill that new schools and even newly funded established schools look into whole community planning; offering increasingly well trained consultants, its Madrikhim, to focus on effective methods of community integration; trying to develop better partnerships with local communities and community institutions, rather than help launch schools by themselves.

## **Conclusion**

This report has explored the complexity of new school development in the Jewish community. Virtually all schools pass through recognizable stages. Naturally, these developmental trajectories are influenced by the character of their founders, volunteers and professional staff. But each school's trajectory—indeed, the experience of each stage—is also profoundly influenced by the context in which it lives: the network of Jewish schools and communal institutions; demographic trends; political patterns; and the regional *zeitgeist*. These contextual factors influence the spirit, pace, and effectiveness with which schools meet their developmental challenges. At the same time, new and newly funded schools have an impact—sometimes small but sometimes dramatic—on the larger Jewish community.

The reciprocal impact of schools and communities is natural and unavoidable. The positive effects of struggles are often as powerful and necessary as the force of good intentions and good planning. In both cases—good planning and free market disruptions—flexibility, resilience, the spirit of collaboration, and ethical behavior add immeasurably to the outcome.