“Human resources are like natural resources; they’re often buried deep. You have to go looking for them; they’re not just lying around on the surface.”

Ken Robinson

This issue tells the story of the diligence and ingenuity that Jewish day schools employ to catalyze resources in support of their students. The term “resources” are often equated with funds, money. Of course, financial resources are essential for running anything, but they are only one part of the larger tapestry that comprises the potential and actual resources of a school. And financial resources cannot be raised, saved, summoned, spent—“catalyzed”—outside of the totality of capital, especially human and social, that makes of a school a living organism.

The first meaning of “resource” in the dictionary is “support.” A school’s resources are all of the things that support the school’s educational mission. The word’s etymology offers a different metaphor: “resource” derives from the Latin resurgere, to rise again, resurgent. Resources are the suppliers of life-giving energy that enable schools to stay fresh, relevant, to continue to renew themselves in service of their students. The root word “source” has the meaning of “well” or origin of a body of water; in Judaism, a “well” is a metaphor for knowledge and inspiration, for Torah in its largest sense. Appropriately, then, the Hebrew word for resource, mashav, derives from the same word used to draw water from a well. In the words of the popular song, Ve-shavtem mayyim be-sasson mimayyenei ha-yeshu’a, You shall draw water joyously from the wells of redemption.

When the authors in this issue talk about “catalyzing” a school’s resources, they have in mind two different ways of supporting and raising their schools. The first is to bring new resources into the school, resources that exist outside of the school: financial, intellectual, educational, artistic and many other forms of resources. The second is to work with the resources that already exist in the school and to make greater use of them. A school’s resources are not infinite, but they are fungible, renewable; the more that we look for them, the more resources we find. They include:

- The resources we have around us, our students, families, faculty, staff and administrators
- The physical site, the buildings and grounds, rooms, lights, paint, utilities
- Symbolic resources: use of walls, dress, flags, language, etc.
- Social and emotional resources that we all harbor
- The community as a resource: how do we use each other, team up to become stronger, to assess our work, to learn and grow

As the articles here demonstrate, the notion of “catalyzing resources” can point to methods that are concrete, successful and reproducible, but at heart it points to magical properties. The term “catalyze,” which derives from chemistry, suggests a magical process: if only we had the right formula or the philosopher’s stone to solve every challenge that day schools face. There is something magical as well in the use of the word “resources” to connote the collective force field of a school—the dynamism, ferment, development over time... Schools connect so many people—“stakeholders” who have a stake in the school’s success, in the children’s development. Think of this issue as a laboratory of ways to mobilize stakeholders and combine elements of a day school to produce new results.

The first section explores ways that schools tap into resources from the circles of communities in which they are embedded.

Ahstrom and Pollin recount the stirring story of the Jewish community’s support for their schools’ resurgence in the wake of devastating hurricanes. Lauffer, Starr and Weiser share their experiences in making the most of their schools’ relationships with host synagogues. Two articles describe ways that federations can catalyze resources for schools across the community:

Grauer, Held and Petersen on Toronto’s collective fundraising campaign, Rogozen and Winn on Los Angeles’ extensive program in professional development. Across the ocean, dozens of schools in the United Kingdom are joining forces for reasons of economy and development, as explained by Capper and Jowett, while Litwack and Rosenberg discuss ways that US day schools can tap into government support. The next articles describe specific partnerships that have supported day school learning and growth: hospitals and homeless shelters (Kinman-Ford); senior living facility (Keces); camps (Gerstl); university (Peters and Quient).

Our spread from schools showcases lasting resources that students created for their schools. The next section is devoted to methods that day schools have found to maximize resources within the school. Marcus provides a comprehensive primer on school rentals. Christensen describes a method to increase enrollment and revenue. The next two explore innovative symbiotic relationships within the same space: an Orthodox school and a non-denominational shul (Segal); a day school and school with extra learning support (Cashman and Scheinberg). Margrett presents a new platform for sharing lessons in Jewish studies. Leibowitz suggests a way for administrators to support teachers most effectively, and Levine offers considerations for teachers who share the same classroom space.

May the new year bring to your school and all your stakeholders the material and spiritual resources you need to thrive and grow, from strength to strength.
From the CEO | Paul Bernstein
Levers and Catalysts

From the Board
Ann Pava | Gail Norry | Lisa Coll
The Room Where It Happens

The Advice Booth
Helen London
Getting on the Same Page with an Endowment Campaign

Commentary
All in the Family?

On Board
Dana Maze Ehrlich | Michael Rubin | Pesha Isenberg
Balancing the Annual Campaign and Endowment Building

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Endowments at Jewish Day Schools Have Come a Long Way

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Rabbi Aaron Finkelstein
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Meet Prizmah’s New Staff

On My Nightstand

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Collaboration for Transformation: Young and Old
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Schools and Camps: Partnering for the Future
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It is a long time since I formally studied science, and I continue to be fascinated by how terms from basic physics and chemistry are appropriated for metaphorical use in our daily life. Over the past year, we have been in discussion with many day school stakeholders to help create Prizmah's strategic plan, which will be rolled out in the coming months. In that process, we have employed terms like “lever” and “catalyst” to articulate how to maximize Prizmah's role. One definition of a lever is “a mechanical device that moves something that seems intractable.” A catalyst is “a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change.” Powerful metaphors indeed for Jewish day schools, the Jewish “change agent.”

As we learn in high school physics, one of the core principles or “immutable laws” is that matter can be neither created nor destroyed, but it can be moved or transformed. We can use tools to nudge atoms and we can trigger chemical reactions, but the core elements remain in a kind of constant state of existence. This idea also comes to mind, somewhat paradoxically, during the High Holiday piyyut when we speak of ourselves as the raw material in the hands of God the creator, at whose will we are shaped or formed. The very tangible metaphor of “medium” in the hands of an “artist” evokes a sense of choice, design and flexibility (on the part of the artist more than the medium, of course). God can remold us, and perhaps by extension we can also transform ourselves, which is one of the highest aspirations of Yom Kippur and the season of repentance.

When we talk about school transformation or change in a field, we employ these physical and artistic metaphors as a way of acknowledging our awareness of the inherent limitations every school faces—finite resources, for one—and also the enormous potential creative power each school possesses to change the lives of so many students. In the year ahead, Prizmah will continue to act as a lever and replicate the enormous power of catalysts. We remain committed to serving you in ways that are relevant and valuable. We are here to meet your needs, to provide the tools you use to deepen the potential of your school and, by extension, each student you serve.

This fall, we will convene the Day School Investor Summit, bringing together philanthropic change agents, dreamers and investors. Attendees will connect personally and gain exposure to multiple strategies and new models to maximize the impact of their philanthropic investments. The summit will provide resources and solutions from experts and peers in philanthropy, marketing and communications, as well as fresh inspiration for investing strategically in local and national day school initiatives. From this catalyzing event, a powerful North American network of donors and influencers will emerge, containing within it the power, passion and determination that can transform the future of day schools.

Similarly, the March 2019 Prizmah Conference, whose theme is “Dare to Dream,” invites day school leaders and professionals to step outside the day-to-day pressures of work and step inside their day school dreams. Participants will reconnect with the motivations that inspired their passions for day school education. Through peer-to-peer encounters and expert-led sessions, participants will be empowered to catalyze their own learning experience. The conference enables us to lever-age the vast potential of the field so that schools can make transformative impact.

What opportunities will help schools fulfill their dreams for their students?

Everything Prizmah does starts from the point of view of the school. What opportunities will help schools fulfill their dreams for their students? In this issue of HaYidion, we focus on ways schools access and make efficient use of precious resources. While the pool of resources cannot be considered infinite, we do believe that, with appropriate levers and catalysts, such as expertise, best practices, partnerships and collaboration across community institutions, there are ample opportunities to make progress in areas that had previously seemed intractable and to increase rates of change in dramatic ways. We are excited to celebrate these transformations with you, and we wish you a most dynamic start to the school and Jewish year.
**FROM THE BOARD**

**THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS**

*Prizmah board members Ann Pava, Gail Norry and Lisa Coll recently discussed the upcoming Prizmah Day School Investor Summit, taking place November 11-12 in Bal Harbour, Florida.*

**Why get excited about an investor summit?**

*Gail:* It has been close to 20 years since major philanthropists who are passionate about day schools have had the chance to be in the same room. A lot has changed in these years, and the time has come to make a bold, serious statement about the future for Jewish day schools.

*Ann:* Being a Jewish day school philanthropist is lonely. Some of us are funding local schools in very significant ways without a strategic connection to the bigger picture. The Summit will create a network and give participants a sense that they have peers and colleagues who share their passion for day school and who face similar opportunities and challenges.

*Lisa:* We are opening up a space for conversations that can lead to big, transformative initiatives. I like to say that we are setting the stage for inspiring innovation and daring dreams.

**Why now?**

*Lisa:* When Prizmah was formed almost three years ago, any sense of overlap or competition among the previous organizations disappeared. We now have one organization dedicated to Jewish day schools, and everyone is at the same table, across all sorts of denominational, geographic and other differences. Prizmah is the only table where a conversation about the future of day schools can happen, and philanthropic leaders need to be there.

*Gail:* Prizmah’s strategic plan focuses on innovation, catalyzing resources and leadership through our network approach. Our organization is established, and we have a roadmap for making lasting impact. What we need now is input from the major donors and community leadership to take on the “next big thing” that will keep our schools vibrant and vital.

*Ann:* Things have changed a lot since the first day school donor convenings. We now have success stories from places like Montreal, MetroWest New Jersey and Boston about what it looks like when communities and philanthropists partner. There is a new generation of donors who can contribute to and benefit from meeting each other and learning together.

*Gail:* It is a tense time for day schools and for Jewish life in general. Demographic changes mean that some small schools have gotten even smaller or that a community that once supported multiple schools is now considering consolidation. We see a generation of parents who for the most part have been less connected to Jewish education than their predecessors. And, critically, the intensive Jewish education and values day schools provide are our best preparation for young Jews who will confront virulent anti-Israel rhetoric and activities so common on college campuses. Now more than ever, we need to bring together the people who are truly charting the course for the future of day schools.

**Why would someone want to attend?**

*Ann:* In addition to the incredible networking, donors who attend the Summit will experience in a very short time an intimate program that is designed to leave lasting impressions. Speakers like Randi Zuckerberg, Mem Bernstein, Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Erica Brown, and Alison Lebovitz of PBS fame interviewing Paula Gottesman and Joel Segal will leave people inspired. Specially crafted sessions will leave participants with tangible actions to take back to their schools and communities.

*Lisa:* For me, in addition to the formal sessions, it is the sideline conversations, the elevator chats, where personal connections are made and ideas are shared, that can make enormous difference. I am also thrilled to have a chance to learn more about innovation from legendary day school supporters Louis and Manette Mayberg, who are opening their home to Summit participants.

*Gail:* You can’t underestimate interpersonal connections. I spoke recently with someone about attending the Summit, and his first reaction was, “We are all alone here.” Day schools are too important for their supporters to feel isolated.

**What can we expect after the Summit?**

*Gail:* The Summit is really designed as a working meeting. We are keyed up to hatch the next big thing—whatever that is—for day schools. The Summit will be the “room where it happens.”

*Ann:* I see this Summit as just the beginning, a catalyst that builds momentum in terms of relationships, ideas and connections. I expect the players at the Summit to form working groups based on the priorities that are shared.

*Lisa:* The Summit is asking day school investors to become ambassadors, back in their home communities and nationally. Prizmah has a vision where every Jewish family who wants a Jewish day school education can access it, and where every Jewish family in fact chooses day school for their children. That can only happen with the participation of philanthropic leaders.

My fantasy outcome for this event: the creation of a megafund so that every child who wants to can attend a Jewish day school. It can happen.

*If you or a philanthropist you know are interested in attending the Summit, please contact Jenny Wechter at jennyw@prizmah.org for more information.*
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hadar.org/programs/day-school-educators-institute
The Resourcefulness of a Community Under Distress

In a genuine crisis, what should a school know and expect from its immediate and larger community? What resources, financial, personal and otherwise, can a school rely upon and look to draw upon? We are both heads of Jewish day schools that suffered from catastrophic hurricanes, Katrina and Harvey. Traumatic events such as these can present a strange combination of devastation and opportunity. Conditions of chaos disrupt stable systems while fostering environments that may be ripe for creative emergence. In the aftermath of calamitous events, we’ve been able to reflect on what we’ve learned as leaders, how our communities responded, and suggestions for the future.

WHAT HAPPENED

Sharon Pollin, Jewish Community Day School of Greater New Orleans: JCDS completed 2004-2005 with its first ever eighth-grade graduation and an enrollment of 86 students. On August 29, Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the surrounding areas. Our school’s first floor was flooded, requiring major repairs. The school would be closed for a year; families evacuated the city. Twenty percent of all evacuees stayed away from New Orleans for the long term.

Dan Ahlstrom, Beth Yeshurun Day School: Hurricane Harvey made landfall along the Middle Texas Coast on August 25, 2017. The storm expanded rapidly from a tropical depression to a major hurricane in less than 40 hours and deluged the city in 51 inches of rainfall. Beth Yeshurun Day School and Congregation, located in separate buildings, were both flooded. Three hundred students and their families were displaced. The school split up, functioning in different locations, and returned fully to the campus on January 9, 2018.

THE IMPACT

SP: JCDS had no idea where our families were, or if they were in town or in another city. Families able to return to the city had enrolled their children in other schools. Many decided to stay where they had evacuated. The school was faced with the first of two existential crises. In order to determine the viability of reopening as a K-8 school, the first order of business was to find our former students. Two devoted school employees spent countless hours on the phone and internet tracking them down to find out how they were and where they were. (The head of school had fled and did not return.)

DA: Our first challenge was communication. We needed to know the flood’s impact on our families, teachers and staff. This began with a simple communication tree. As head, I reached out to senior admin, who in turn reached out to their...
direct reports, who reached out to teachers and our families. We used cellphones, text messaging, email and in some cases personal visits to find out and document what had occurred. This information was crucial in the first week after the flood and again later when we applied for relief funds.

Second, we needed to assess the damage quickly. We had mistakenly thought, at first, that we could use our parents, temporary labor and other volunteers to clean up and move back into our school in a couple of days. Thankfully, we also reached out to a damage and disaster restoration service and a commercial contractor. They were able to help us professionally access the damage and make useful recommendations regarding the impact of the flood on our facilities. Our board and the board of Congregation Beth Yeshurun worked closely together during the first days of the flood and acted quickly. We placed the school as our first priority and began work on restoring the facilities as soon as the rain stopped.

Third, we needed to find a temporary home and get up and running as soon as possible. Once it was determined that we could not return to our campus, our senior administrative team and executive committee began looking for temporary locations. We considered portables, strip malls, abandoned schools and recreation centers. Each of these options was unfeasible for a variety of reasons. Our local community middle and high school, Emery Weiner, and the Reform Congregation Beth Israel, home of the elementary Schlenker School, made room for us on their campuses. We also had considerable help from the Jewish Federation of Houston. The elementary school was back up and running within a week and the early childhood program within two weeks.

THE STRATEGIES

SP: The New Orleans Jewish Community had relocated its leadership to Baton Rouge, about 60 miles away. Their first order of business was to find people and determine their needs. When it came time to restore the school several months later, thanks to the generosity of the national Jewish community, including the AVI CHAI Foundation, United Jewish Communities and the federations of several cities, the dollars were here. The majority of the community was committed to ensuring a thriving, pluralistic school. Even though many of the students had left the city or enrolled in other schools, there was a mentality of “If we rebuild it, they will come.” Work began by tightly stretched professional contractors; everyone in the city needed help rebuilding. Our building’s facilities manager was a devoted lifeline in this endeavor. The first floor was stripped down to the studs, and everything that needed replacing—computers, desks, textbooks—was replaced.

Based on the small numbers of children left in the city who would be willing to return to the day school, the realization soon dawned that it would not be possible to begin where we had left off, as a K-8 school. We needed to shift our point of view from “reopening” the school to a “reboot.” The school would open for students in kindergarten through third grade in August 2006.

DA: In their last strategic planning process before Harvey, our board incorporated risk management. When the flood hit, we were prepared to operate all aspects of our school remotely. Thankfully, our marketing/communications teams were already using a school messenger system to quickly text and email our families. I maintained weekly virtual and in-person meetings for administration to collaborate and tackle issues and needs. However, there was a learning curve to using the technology.

BYDS communicated often with our temporary hosts and repeatedly told them how thankful we were to them for taking us in during our time of need. This helped soften the blow when we asked for a few weeks more of accommodation. Our emergency communication plan worked as anticipated. Payroll and other business operations were also intact even though we did not have access to our campus.

THE STAKEHOLDERS

SP: The recovery trajectory of JCDS after Katrina was not smooth. The school reopened in August 2006 with an enrollment of 23, recovered to 52 students in grades pre-K to 5 by 2011, but by 2013 enrollment had plummeted to only 27 students. A sustainability expert was hired who recommended that the school close. I believe it was the shock of this moment, even more than the storm’s devastation, that galvanized our core stakeholders. The expert’s advice was soundly rejected, and vows were made to access every possible resource to overcome the obstacles that blocked the school’s successful future.

DA: Harvey's impact on our school caused our stakeholders to band together like never before in our history. It’s a shame it takes a crisis to do that. Parent and community support was overwhelming at first. It was great to have people available, but in the immediate aftermath of the flood, there were times when there was little work to do, when we had to wait before moving forward.

As time progressed, all of the stressors that accompanied this experience had a significant effect on morale. As overtasked staff and volunteers worked to run a school on multiple campuses while restoring our original school, tempers occasionally flared, illness and cynicism increased. As information changed or just wasn’t available, it caused mistrust. We lost some staff and some families. Our teams really had to rely on one another for emotional support. We always set our focus on the students. Schedules were made and changed as needed. We learned and grew from each other.

THE PROCESS

SP: One of the most useful things our sustainability consultant did was to identify 12 specific operational challenges she viewed as absolutely insurmountable. In effect, this list became our strategic plan. (Talk about lemonade from lemons!) The board, faculty and I prioritized, tackling several fronts at the same time.

Because the school had run through a lot of money in the years following Katrina, including much of its endowment, a key decision was made not to ask donors for money, at least not right away. We asked for emotional and verbal support but not dollars. We understood we had to first demonstrate that we were doing whatever it took to be a viable institution. This was a positive attention-grabber.
Another important moment had to do with our participation in Prizmah’s Governance and Fundraising Academy. Many of our top lay leadership participated, proving that we would walk the talk of change and improvement. It also helped that we achieved a significant matching grant challenge through the Legacy Heritage Foundation with the help of a new local funder. The support of national funders effectively communicated to our local constituency that we had turned the corner toward viability. This, in turn, supported our enrollment efforts. Families became ever more assured that the school would remain open throughout their children’s tenure.

Several other factors were also of significance. Prizmah’s Atidenu program for recruitment and retention taught us to collect and utilize data and best practices. We reopened a pre-K-4 program that had closed in 2012 and are seeing solid enrollment in that group, especially among younger siblings of current students. We opened a baby program in 2016 that serves infants to 18 months, year round. With only 10 spaces, it is now full with a modest waiting list. This August, our sixth grade reopened for the first time since the storm, including the entire fifth grade cohort from last year.

Finally, a few months ago, JCDS broke through its most challenging barrier and received community permission to begin an early childhood program in 2019. With the addition of classes for children from 15 months to three years, for the first time, the school will serve families with children from infancy through sixth grade. This is especially significant in the New Orleans educational landscape, where students are no longer required to attend neighborhood public schools, but rather must apply for admission to various parish public and charter schools. School choice may have benefits, but it is a fraught, stressful experience for parents as they strive to become informed consumers who are able to enroll their children into a good public school. Our ability to offer a seamless alternative makes a large impact in this community.

**DA:** It probably won’t be surprising when I say the process was continually evolving. Facilitating the needs of the teachers and families, construction, coordinating with our congregation and the broader community, and working with our board and donors did not lend itself to anything resembling consistency. We had a meeting schedule, but more than that, I had a list of people that I needed to check in with, some daily, some weekly, and so on. I kept track of the list and when I needed to reach out.

We had three distinct turnaround moments. The first was when we secured a new space for our students so that we could resume school during construction. Second, when we all returned to our campus after the winter break. Third, Pesach break. We had been so hyperfocused on recovery and operations that we hardly had time to think about anything else. After Pesach, our community finally had the head space to appreciate the tremendous amount of effort and work that went into our recovery efforts. You could visibly see the relief on people’s faces as they entered the school. Many of our families are still not back in their homes at this time. For them, the school is again a place of consistency, stability and support.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

**SP:** The knowledge that I was not alone gave me tremendous strength. I had the support of our leadership, of the federation, of my Prizmah coaches, of my doctoral advisor. It was important for me to have these resources with whom to process various elements of the challenge. For our families and faculty, I understood I had to stay positive and upbeat. Projecting a sense of optimism and strength proved critical and contagious, as did providing everyone with concrete information to share loud and proud with the community. Did our enrollment increase? Did test scores rise? Is our pre-K-K class full with a waiting list? Did we raise more dollars from more donors than ever before? Shout it out!

One of my greatest learnings is how critical it is to engage as broad a constituency as possible and to never stop those efforts. Each individual has the potential to energize others in ways that I may never know. Once the happy buzz begins, we’ve got to keep this question top-of-mind: How do we keep it going?

**DA:** If, God forbid, we go through another Harvey-type situation, I would undoubtedly hire a crisis manager. I learned that patience is a finite resource, and it does run out. I learned to ask for what I needed and refuse things that we did not. I learned to decide quickly, to make the best decision I could with the information I had at the moment. I learned not to fixate on what doesn’t matter but to keep the process moving forward.

Based on our experience, I would strongly suggest that schools be prepared for all eventualities by practicing holding meetings remotely. The issues will become immediately apparent, and you can work out the bugs before an actual disaster. **SP:** Disruption is a challenge. It can also serve as an intense wake-up call that provokes reflection on our core mission, vision and values. Traumatic events tend to cause us to laser-focus on what really matters and to engage others in those conversations. Disruption doesn’t always have to be catastrophic to engender change and growth. Even small disturbances can serve as an occasion to “shake things up,” to fend off stagnation and complacency.

**DA:** Harvey affected the entire city and community. Everyone needed remediation, relocation and renovation. Nevertheless, there was a special outpouring of generosity and true concern for our staff and families in the immediate aftermath of the flood. By way of example, when we secured locations for our elementary and middle schools, we needed to move all of our equipment to the new sites. We had very little time, and most of the desks, chairs etc. had to be cleaned and disinfected before our students could use them. Within thirty minutes of securing the new locations, one parent had connected me with a mover who arranged transportation and manpower, another set up volunteers to clean the equipment; others helped coordinate communication, while a different group shopped for needed items. Throughout the year, through obstacles big and small, our community always seemed to find a reasonable and timely solution.

The only parting thought I have is an overwhelming feeling of gratitude. So many individuals, families and organizations locally and across the nation supported our school in so many ways that I cannot list them all. I hope this article finds its way to everyone who reached out to BYDS last year. Thank you!
Imagine a family that has been a synagogue member for a decade: their children have all gone through your preschool, are enrolled in the religious school and are currently attending the local public school. As things change for this family, they realize that they are looking for a different school experience, and starting in September, they are enrolling in the synagogue day school.
Did the religious school “lose” a family? Did the day school “win” with enrollment? Did the synagogue “win” or “lose” with increased revenue and maintained membership? These are all real issues that synagogues with thriving religious schools, youth programs and day schools often face. How we answer these questions, and the many others that this situation raises, can inform how we face our communal future.

One often finds Jewish day schools, synagogues and religious schools perceiving themselves to be in competition with one another. Our proposition is that this is the wrong mindset for the institutions involved, and certainly for the greater good of the broader Jewish community. Instead, these institutions should be symbiotic, share resources and "lift all boats." We need not be adversaries. Rather, if we see ourselves as one whole rather than as silos, all can benefit. This has proven to be the case at our two Reform day schools, where enrollment is healthy and financial stability is strong.

Temple Beth Am Day School in Miami (15 months through fifth grade), the oldest Reform Jewish day school in the nation, shares a campus with Temple Beth Am. Wise School (a day school, early childhood-sixth grade) and Wise Religious School (K-sixth grade) are part of Stephen Wise Temple in Los Angeles, one of the country’s largest Reform synagogues. Despite our schools’ different models, both are working to assure a sense of cohesion for the synagogue, religious school and day school.

**PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS**

A shared mission needs to be embraced and communicated by senior leadership.

The board, clergy and school administration must actualize the mission that we are one institution. It must be articulated and implemented from job description and employee orientation to function as a unified whole. This may be difficult for employees already in place, and employees who are unwilling to embrace a joint institutional vision may need to be let go.

On the other hand, there can be a positive outcome when hiring or restructuring as one institution. For example, at Stephen Wise, the incoming day camp director was hired to oversee two of the day schools’ afterschool enrichment programs. This gave the school and the camp a natural connection to discuss students, families and curriculum while creating a full-time position. The new employee is also an alum of the day school: a homegrown success story.

The organizational structure, on paper and in practice, should support and validate the symbiotic relationship.

At Temple Beth Am, there is a monthly meeting with the executive director, senior rabbi, religious school director and head of school. The executive director is an ex-facto member of the school board, and the head of school attends management team meetings of the temple.

At Stephen Wise Temple, the school does not have a separate board of directors; the synagogue board oversees and has fiduciary responsibility for the day school. On an administrative level, the head of school is an integral part of the temple senior leadership team, as well as a visible partner to the senior rabbi.

Shared mission can inspire shared experiences...and shared space can inspire shared frustration.

Who “owns” the classroom space, technology and supplies? Can a day school teacher send an angry email on Monday morning if the chairs in the classroom are not put back exactly as they were? Does the religious school get a cabinet in the classroom to store their supplies? There are words when different departments and interests are vying for the same space on the same date. There are considerations as to how fast the custodial staff can turn over a room. There are families booking bar and bat mitzvahs and weddings. Let’s not forget
that events also just happen, such as funerals, brises and baby namings. Executive decisions then need to be made on who has priority for a space.

While there are daily challenges with shared space, there is also an opportunity for relationship building and perpetuating the sense of shared vision: combined professional development for day school and religious school faculty; an educational evening for both day school and religious school families on a topic relevant to parenting or child development.

In terms of connecting day school families more deeply with the synagogue, there are many opportunities. Each grade in the day school can participate in Friday night services in the temple followed by a family Shabbat dinner led by clergy. Clergy can work with fifth-grade students on the divrei Torah that they present at tefillah. The day school graduation and other important school ceremonies can be held in the sanctuary, rather than in an auditorium.

There are also opportunities to highlight students from both schools. When Stephen Wise Temple opened its new building in November, the dedication ceremony featured students from both schools, an important statement for the community.

There needs to be cross-marketing and recruitment.

The day school admissions director and the temple membership director must work as a team, whether or not membership is required of day school students, as it is at Stephen Wise Temple, but not at Temple Beth Am. When families express interest in the school, every information packet given out by the admissions director includes temple membership information, and vice versa. When families with young children sign up for temple membership, the membership director walks the family over to the day school admissions director’s office for a meet-and-greet.

On the other end, when families leave the school, whether the preschool or the elementary school, the head of school and the admissions director work with the religious school director to maintain that family’s membership—and their children’s Jewish education—through the religious school.

There is a united financial structure.

There is one finance office for the whole institution: temple, day school and religious school. Although the day school has its own budget, as do the temple and religious school, the bottom line of the budget is really one. The day school budget does not have line items for utilities, insurance, custodial and maintenance, etc. It is incorporated in the temple’s budget. Therefore, the day school revenue becomes a “contribution to overhead” to the temple/campus budget.

In development, the day school and temple work together. At Temple Beth Am, the latest endowment campaign had a goal of raising $10 million in 18 months. This successful campaign was for the whole campus, and that is how solicitations were made. Although some donors wanted their dollars specifically earmarked, and that was honored, it was not the intent of the campaign or solicitations. The Committee of 100 (temple members who pay more than the required temple dues so that those who cannot afford the dues are not turned away) includes many day school families. This past year, Stephen Wise Temple had a combined gala for the temple and school. Both groups were represented in the planning committees, honorees, and most importantly, the donors and attendees. In addition to the funds raised, which were equally divided between the temple and the day school, the experience of the evening was one of communal unity.

Day schools are a population for deeper synagogue engagement.

At Temple Beth Am, most day school families, especially with two or more children, join the temple in order to get the temple member tuition discount. At Stephen Wise Temple, day school families become members of the synagogue upon enrollment. In both cases, these families then benefit from all the temple offerings and programming. It builds temple membership, and when developed properly, can be a wonderful path to synagogue leadership. At Temple Beth Am, the overwhelming majority of temple board presidents are current or former day school parents; similarly, a significant number of day school parents have served on the board of trustees at Stephen Wise Temple.
Toronto’s Day of Giving: Raising $3M+ through “Co-Opetition”

In Greater Toronto, we are blessed with an abundance of day schools of different sizes and identities, from elementary through high school, 14 of which receive funding from the UJA Federation. In many ways, the market is crowded. Parents choosing a school go on tours and attend open houses at multiple institutions. Grandparents, whose families are divided among schools, attend multiple grandparents days, Chanukah celebrations and Passover seders. Philanthropists are solicited by multiple schools—and by federation.

CHALLENGES TO COEXISTENCE

Full membership and associate membership

Temple Beth Am made the strategic decision to grant families who are members in good standing at other area synagogues a day school tuition discount. When families aligned to other synagogues seek a Jewish day school education for their children, the temple has put aside membership requirement and risen to the obligation to be a school for the larger Jewish community.

In Los Angeles, other temples with preschools are hesitant to send prospective kindergarten students to Wise School for fear of losing them as members. In general, day schools and temples do not share associate memberships. This situation is not unique to Stephen Wise Temple, as Los Angeles has a number of day schools affiliated with synagogues, and the conversation needs to happen on a larger scale. The clergy and lay leaders at all schools and temples must come to an agreement on an associate membership dues structure that allows families to belong to one temple and attend a day school at another.

Staff equity in raises

Should raises be the same for everyone, both school employees and temple employees? This has proven to be an area of contention. At Temple Beth Am, the rise in tuition is usually tied to a pay raise for teachers, but temple membership dues do not go up accordingly—and yet temple personnel enjoy the same pay raise. It is an issue constantly raised by the school board. Stephen Wise Temple moved away from raises being consistent across both the temple and school staff, and adopted a model whereby each part of the organization gives raises within its own budget. This can create tension between the two staffs.

Security

Security is a major area of contention on the Temple Beth Am campus. There is considerable disagreement between the clergy and the day school board. As with most synagogues, there is a desire to be warm and welcoming, which includes a mindset of “open access” to the campus. In contrast, particularly in light of the present world of school shootings, the head of school, school board and parents are demanding a more secure campus, with the ability to know who is on campus at all times. This becomes particularly problematic when events are free and open to the public, or when walk-ins come to see the clergy without making prior appointments. A security task force was put in place to investigate how this balance is struck at similar institutions.

Stephen Wise has not found security to be challenging. There is a consistent security protocol for the entire site, temple and school, with all visitors stopped at a security gate. Families across both communities appreciate the sense of safety and security on campus; in fact, it is an asset in recruitment and enrollment. Our security staff works hard to be warm and welcoming, while at the same time maintaining strict safety standards.

No one article could identify all of the challenges and benefits to a shared institutional model for day schools, religious schools and synagogues. We have tried to highlight some of the lessons we’ve learned and continue to face as we endeavor to model the notion that Kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh—all in the Jewish community are responsible for one another, and what strengthens one institution strengthens us all.
Nearly a decade ago, when one of us was attending a PEJE conference, we were introduced to the term “co-opetition.” We believe this term accurately characterizes our community. On the one hand, we compete. For students. For donors. For dates for curriculum nights and graduations. We compete for column inches in the Canadian Jewish News. At the same time, we collaborate. We believe that when the entire system is healthier, we are all healthier, and conversely, when one of our schools is ailing, we all feel the pain.

Collaboration has, over the last number of years, taken many forms.

Together, our schools and UJA Federation host a cadre of communities of practice (CoPs) for school leaders. Heads, development directors, recruitment directors, administrators, school presidents, treasurers and tuition chairs all have their own CoP. At times, the CoPs are forums for sharing best practices; at times, they are tables where we tackle pressing community issues, and at times, they provide moments of therapy, giving support to the weary who need to know that they are not alone. At their best, they are all of these and more. No one is required to attend as part of their job or as a requirement of funding, but because as a community we believe in co-opetition and because we value the community of peers, we choose to attend. We understand that the stronger our schools are as a whole, the more Jewish students will choose day school, and the stronger each of the individual schools will be.

Together, we have marketed Jewish day school education, seeking to grow the total pie of day school enrollment rather than compete to expand our individual slice. Under the slogan “Choose Jewish,” we have hosted events extolling the virtues of a day school education and we have taken out shared advertisements publicizing our open houses. With funding from the Harold Grinspoon and AVI CHAI Foundations and with the support of Prizmah and UJA Federation, our elementary schools collaborate on an initiative to recruit PJ Library families to day school. Together, we have run scores of programs to bring these families into our doors, and over the last three years we have seen 48 of these families enroll in day school, 13 of whom were not previously on the schools’ radars.

Together, we conduct research to develop data-driven strategies that no one school could accomplish on its own. We share detailed enrollment to track trends across the system. We have conducted market research studies of geographic regions of the city and sub-sectors of the educational system. We developed a financial benchmarking tool in order to seek efficiencies by comparing the cost structures across our schools with other independent and public schools. This year we will launch a system of citywide exit interviews to develop systemic strategies to stem attrition.

Over the last two years, this model of co-opetition has taken a new form through the development of an annual Day of Giving – Raise Toronto, a 24-hour online fundraising campaign. In the first year, our community of schools together raised $1.9 million. In the second year, we crested to $3 million. As we begin planning for our third year, we see even greater potential.

The campaign has two ideological starting points.

First, we believe that day school education is a public good, a service that benefits the wellbeing of our whole community, and therefore should be supported by the full breadth of our community. Our federation models this philosophy by investing over $10 million from its annual campaign in day school education. We use the Day of Giving to amplify this work by reaching farther and engaging the whole community, beyond day school parents, grandparents and alumni and beyond federation donors, in strengthening the future of our community through day school education.

Second, we believe that we can collectively raise more money through co-opetition than we can individually. We could each run our own campaign, separately, on our own days. Such isolated campaigns would likely reach our base: parents, grandparents, alumni and friends, but have very little further impact. When done together, we believe, the competition and resulting communal buzz allows us to increase the total giving.

During the Day of Giving, each school runs its own fundraising campaign for its specific needs hosted on a shared website. We each send out emails, mount a telephone campaign and bombard social media. On the campaign’s central website, each school’s goals and progress are charted next to each other. There is a certain adrenaline rush seeing each school increase its pledges and seeing the schools push to reach their goal.

As we begin to plan for our third year of Raise Toronto, we are laying the groundwork to reach farther. Together, the schools are equally sharing the cost of hiring a fundraiser to coordinate the campaign and seek corporate sponsors. These sponsors will serve as matches for gifts made across the campaign. We are expanding our outreach to key supporters, including community rabbis, summer camps and other allied organizations, to help spread the momentum of the campaign. Finally, we are hoping to reach out to vendors throughout the city to ask them to partner in our efforts and donate proceeds from sales on and around the Day of Giving to Jewish education.

In an environment of scarce resources—students, funders, teachers and others—our natural inclination is to compete. We believe, however, that as a community we are better served harnessing this competitive energy to grow the field of day school education and find ways to build off of one another.
BJE: Builders of Jewish Education, founded in 1937, is an independent nonprofit serving the greater Los Angeles area and the only organization in LA dedicated solely to supporting and enhancing Jewish educational experiences, from early childhood through high school, across the full Jewish religious and cultural spectrum. BJE provides programs and activities that connect families and children to a broad range of Jewish educational opportunities.

In Proverbs we read “Hanokeh l’naar al pi darko,” “Teach a child according to his needs.” BJE extends this educational dictum by accessing and leveraging resources in support of school-based education. We work to strengthen schools, educators, students, board members and families according to their needs, partnering with them to create and provide value. The impact of this work is substantial, systemwide and enduring.

BJE’s Center for Excellence in Early Childhood & Day School Education serves more than 50 early childhood centers and 37 Jewish day schools. These schools, with total enrollment exceeding 15,000 students, mirror the religious and socioeconomic diversity that characterizes LA Jewry. With a limited budget, we serve as an advocate, planner, catalyst and creative leader in advancing Jewish learning. How do we do it?

First, we listen…a lot! We engage in ongoing school visits and needs assessments with our schools. Second, we see our schools both as unique, autonomous organizations and as part of an interconnected educational system. As each school improves, we know that others will take note and want to follow suit. Third, we secure investment from the Federation, individuals and foundations who recognize the value and substantial impact our services and programs have on the schools. Fourth, we create strong, trusting relationships between BJE, funders and schools. Fifth, as a result of continuous feedback and evaluation, we are nimble in terms of what we offer (and fund).

Some examples:

As day schools were adopting SEL (social and emotional learning) programs, we offered joint workshops in the Responsive Classroom approach for schools that chose this program. This approach led immediately to a broader community of practice (CoP).

Based on requests from schools, we conducted seminars in governance and development for board members. This program led to improvement in professional and lay practice within individual schools, as well as in the larger day school community.

In order to encourage financial stability and viability, BJE initiated day school affordability and endowment development efforts on the communal and individual school level. Through funders and school-based efforts, the campaign for affordability in high schools raised $17 million for participating schools, and the elementary school endowment campaign raised $65 million for schools. By working within a collaborative process, rather than alone, each of the schools improved its professional practice and its “yield.”

One of the most important things we do is create and sustain CoPs for a variety of school positions, including heads of school, early childhood directors, development directors and Hebrew specialists. These CoPs function as support networks, as well as ways to quickly disseminate best practices. The agendas for these meetings are set by the members.
Again, our ability to create such opportunities leads to widespread school improvement, collegiality, and an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to learn together and appreciate one another.

Rather than impose an agenda or specific approach to school improvement, our annual retreats for day school and early childhood administrators are built entirely on input and feedback from school leaders. As a result, these events are well attended, greatly appreciated and result in significant follow-up activity at many of the schools.

BJE represents 27 of the 37 BJE day schools accredited with the LA Unified School District to help schools access Federal Title I & II funds. The funds are to be used for instructional services, counseling and professional development. BJE works with each school to ensure that its submission of requests is accurate and creates impact on the school. BJE helped schools access services in 2017-18 valued at close to $2 million. School leaders realize that BJE’s involvement yields greater financial support for each day school and for the day school system.

BJE accredits Jewish day schools. We require schools first to receive accreditation from statewide accrediting bodies; then they participate in an additional, more demanding “Finance & Governance Self-Study Process,” which includes site visits, data collection and consultation. This process is done at no cost to the school and has helped schools become stronger, more viable institutions. Topics addressed have included updated administration of parsonage arrangements, compliance with tax requirements for faculty tuition-remission programs, updates in legal issues connected to enrollment contracts and harassment and immunization policies.

Several years ago, BJE identified a law firm specializing in representation of schools and school districts, and created a legal consortium open to its accredited schools. For a modest annual fee (scaled based on school budget), schools benefit from ongoing seminars, updates and consultation on legal issues relating to schools and enjoy reduced rates for school-specific services. While a few schools continue to maintain a relationship with their own attorney, this approach gives the majority of our schools access to attorneys and legal information that will help them act appropriately in all areas of school operations.

A grant from the Jewish Community Foundation has helped BJE create Project EnAble, a program that makes educational therapists available to day school children (at their schools) at reduced rates. BJE screens specialists and coordinates the project, saving the schools time and money, while providing more families access to academic and emotional support. By coordinating the therapists, BJE can provide timely access to a variety of therapists.

There’s a saying that “you have to be visible to be valuable.” Much of our work with schools requires face-to-face meetings. With so many schools, spread out over 470 square miles, it is difficult to visit the schools as much as we would like. We use Zoom, phone calls and email to bridge the gap and maintain constant connection with administrators.

The relevance and methodology of BJE is all about relationships and perceived value. Continuous communication flow between BJE and our schools, and access to funds and programs, improve schools individually and strengthens the entire school community. Our schools see that we care about them and work hard on their behalf. They trust that we know them and will help them fulfill their mission. Finally, with an “all boats rise” approach, we see that improvement in one school leads to system-wide improvement. Leveraging resources communally is a multiplier that is often more valuable than a check.

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GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE WITH AN ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

Your board and administration are excited about their decision to launch an endowment campaign. In announcing this campaign to the faculty, the head of school discovers that teachers are less enthusiastic. In their view, any money raised for an endowment might better be spent addressing the school's current needs, including improvements in the classrooms, educational supplies and technology, and teacher salaries. How can the head convince the teachers that an endowment is an important priority for the school?

Teachers raise important concerns that should be considered at the beginning of any endowment campaign at a Jewish day school. These concerns highlight the importance of not only external messaging about the endowment effort to the donor community but also internal messaging to teachers and, indeed, all school personnel about this new undertaking.

The internal case for endowment builds consensus and purpose among the entire day school community. If the entire community is on board to build endowment, the effort has a much better chance of succeeding.

Here are some points that successful schools have made to present the case to their teachers and staff:

- Annual and special gifts are never turned away in favor of an endowment gift; these consistent gifts are usually given from income. Endowment gifts are generally (but not always) made from assets.
- Building endowment is a sign of a well-prepared, forward-thinking school to ensure its long-term survival. An endowment signals permanency.
- My colleague Pearl Kane shared the following: When funds are tight at a school, one of the first items deleted from a school’s operating budget may well be professional development for teachers. A healthy endowment will keep up an investment in teachers and competitive salary and benefits.
- Endowments provide the incentive to move towards fundraising maturity; it is an additional platform to build strong relations with donors and move to the next level of fundraising for the school.
- Research has shown that endowment donors are more invested and tend to increase their annual gifts at a higher rate. The increased giving reflects the donor’s commitment to the school.

Teachers are an important part of the partnership of board, administration and volunteers to help the school raise endowment dollars. Include them in your planning.
On the first day of Chanukah 5779, representatives of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom will sign the legal documentation that gives life to the Jewish Community Academy Trust (JCAT), the first Jewish network of schools for the UK’s mainstream Orthodox community. The group will even share some educational resources, a single back office and one board of trustees.

JCAT is designed to address some of the challenges that affect a group of Jewish schools in Britain that cater to a large and highly diverse student population. It also seeks to consider some of the challenges that schools are likely to face over the next five to ten years, most especially in relation to educational technology.

The Jewish school system in the UK is very different from the way such schools exist in the United States. Although there are a small number of private sector schools, the majority operate within the public sector. Secular studies are financed by the government, and parents pay a voluntary supplement that covers Jewish studies and the additional costs of security guards and secure premises. Secular studies in the public sector Jewish schools receive managerial and technical support from their local authority, which is similar to the US school district.

JCAT removes schools from the supervision of the local authority and places them in the equivalent of a US charter management organization (CMO). Over time, many other Jewish schools will be encouraged to join JCAT, and it will become one of the largest providers of Jewish education in the world.

Jewish Unity and Diversity

JCAT is open to schools that operate under the religious authority of Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, and are therefore connected to a group of more than 60 Orthodox shuls, called the United Synagogue. The United Synagogue is the synagogue organization in the UK with the largest membership. Children come from a spectrum of religious backgrounds, from Modern Orthodox to non-observant. Some attend shuls affiliated with other denominations; some are not members of any synagogue.

This diversity presents a challenge for Jewish studies. JCAT is therefore examining how to develop, evaluate and assess a framework in which a variety of different learning activities might be applied in different schools to engage children with Jewish values, Jewish education and Israel. There will not be a standardized or centralized approach, which would be both insensitive and inappropriate. JCAT plans to seek input from rabbis, educators and sociologists in the UK, US, Israel and elsewhere to engage this diverse group.

The UK Jewish schools exist within a heavily regulated national system of education; while this has been very effective at ensuring certain minimum standards, it can stifle creativity and innovation. Indeed, the PISA rankings of global education show that some of the best educational outcomes in the world are achieved elsewhere in Europe. JCAT will try to identify where best practice lies overseas and whether this should be replicated.

Financial Savings

JCAT will also achieve financial economies of scale. While it will always be necessary to maintain some back office staff in each individual school, there is scope for centralization. Selling this service to other schools or networks in London could also serve as an additional source of revenue. While such partnerships already exist in the UK, they are not widespread.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
One of the most significant challenges faced by all schools in the UK is the shortage of teachers in many subjects, particularly math. Many teachers leave the field after a brief career, limiting the pool of experienced educators. In order to improve staff retention, JCAT will work to ensure that employees have the best possible working environment.

The focus will be on two areas. First, a larger organization creates career paths and opportunities that are not available within a group of uncoordinated smaller schools. This is especially important for teachers of subjects like art and music and for teachers of students with special needs. While small schools might not be able to afford specialists in these areas, a consortium of schools could share the cost.

Second, professional learning can be more effective when there is a management structure to ensure that new skills can be effectively propagated around an organization. Individual schools may have quality teachers, but their small management teams leave limited capacity to diffuse or retain their knowledge. This can be more effectively achieved through centralized leadership. JCAT will therefore serve as a professional learning network (PLN) for teachers. While there are already virtual PLNs that support teacher collaboration across different schools, JCAT will have the ability to maintain a robust package of professional learning within a Jewish environment.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
There will be significant changes to classroom practice over the coming years, and these partly arise from developments in artificial intelligence and the future role that robots will play in the learning process. This important development is likely to have two impacts. First, there is the possibility that cobots (robots that operate in collaboration with humans and share the same workspace) will enhance teacher productivity. There are already examples of this overseas, most especially in pre-K, where the learners, who are especially likely to anthropomorphize, appreciate the experience of a cat-sized cobot reading them stories. The second impact is that new technology will greatly enhance the personalized learning that takes place either inside or outside of school. This will support additional differentiation and have a very meaningful impact on children with learning difficulties.

It is also relevant for a Jewish studies curriculum. It is essential to engage students by reaching out to their skill sets, preferred methods of learning and interests. Future developments in the technology of personalized learning will enable us to provide an experience for Jewish education that is tailored to each child’s specific requirements.

However, these new technologies may be difficult to introduce. Many day schools have limited experience of engaging in the long-term capital expenditures that are central to deployment of technology. It is also a very specialized area, and a school network is more likely to be able to employ the staff needed to bring EdTech effectively into the classroom. There are also enormous economies of scale associated with technological infrastructure, which thrives upon standardization, so large buyers will be able to operate with significantly lower costs.

Schools need to be prepared for these developments well in advance. Artificial intelligence, like human intelligence, reacts to its circumstances. Robots are being trained to respond to human feedback. Those schools that participate in beta testing will provide a learning environment for robots, which will then be most adapted to their circumstances. Jewish schools have specific requirements that apply to how they teach and what they teach. We need to embrace this technology at an early stage if our needs are to be accommodated. Many non-Jewish schools have already accomplished this; there is even a charter school that lets EdTech companies operate from its premises.

LEARNING FROM OTHER SCHOOL NETWORKS
There are already a large number of school networks operating across both the US and the UK. They operate in both private and public sectors and typically aim to provide better educational outcomes through specialization. One approach is to address a particular pupil category, such as KIPP, where 95% of students are African American or Latino. At Oasis Community Learning in the UK, 48% of children are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and 31% speak English as an additional language. FlexSchool operates in the Northeast, supporting “gifted and twice exceptional students.” Other CMOs have a specific educational vision, such as AltSchool, which is focused upon technological solutions for personalized learning. Some link a specific vision to a particular subset of children.

These networks do, in general, produce better educational outcomes, as demonstrated by research from Stanford University in the US and by the UK Department for Education. Study of the academic research and the experience of other networks shapes the strategic approach to the development of JCAT.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Building a network of Jewish schools has been a challenging process, but it is not without historical precedent. In 1867, the then chief rabbi encouraged three synagogues in the City of London to form the United Synagogue, and the process took three years. Today, Chief Rabbi Mirvis states, “‘Rabbi’ means ‘teacher,’ and I see the role of chief rabbi as chief teacher.” With his support, we will have created JCAT in a shorter time.

The United Synagogue will soon be 150 years old. Much has changed in Anglo-Jewry since its inception, including absorption of immigrants from Eastern Europe, two world wars and fundamental changes in the way that society views religion. However, the organization remains at the heart of the mainstream Jewish community. One of its successes, and a key point of discussion for JCAT trustees, is to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between efficiencies that are derived from centralization and adapting to local needs. Any form of school collaboration would need to consider what is appropriate, how to achieve this and when change might be desirable.
Ask any day school what they need most, and most will tell you money. With more money, schools could have high-quality programming in a wide array of subjects, hire top-notch leaders and teachers, build optimal learning spaces and, last but not least, offer lower tuition. Lower tuition would help increase enrollment, allowing for more families to benefit from Jewish day school, and reduce the burden on those already making the choice to send their children to day school.

It was precisely for this reason—to increase affordability and accessibility—that efforts to carve out nonpublic school funding from state budgets began in 2013. With a deep network of grassroots activists, community leaders and lawmakers across the country, the Teach Advocacy Network is now the leading single-issue advocacy organization invested in the quality, safety and accessibility of nonpublic schools.

The Teach Advocacy Network has become a serious player in the American Jewish day school world, with offices in states that include New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida and California. The strategy is simple: In each state, Teach builds a strong and dedicated team of lay leaders who are committed to promoting government funding for nonpublic schools. Recognizing that each state legislature is influenced by its own local politics and culture, Teach connects leaders and activists in each state with top lobbyists and strategists to draft legislation specific to their needs and circumstances.

Lay leaders cultivate relationships with public officials, bring legislators to Jewish schools to visit with administrators and students, and create coalitions with local Jewish day schools, federations and other allied stakeholders to fight for equity through greater government funding for nonpublic schools.

The AVI CHAI Foundation recently credited Teach for leading the charge for increased public funding in key states by creating coalitions of day schools from across the religious spectrum. More importantly, AVI CHAI stresses that all of these programs “are consistent with Supreme Court precedent. They have not come at the expense of public schools.” In some states, significant new funding for scholarships has been awarded to nonpublic schools.

Funding opportunities exist that have the potential to provide anywhere from tens of thousands to tens of millions of dollars for Jewish day schools. Included among these opportunities are educational tax credit programs, funding for security improvements, technology upgrades, transportation, universal pre-K, reimbursement for state-mandated services and nursing aid. This funding has the potential for significant impact on a school’s bottom line.

Here are examples of the programs that Teach has been working on in various states.

SECURITY GRANTS/FUNDING
The first priority for any government or community is to keep its citizens safe.

In 2013, Teach NYS played a leading role in advocating for the state legislature to include $4.5 million in security funds in the SAFE Act. In 2016, Teach NYS galvanized record-breaking support to increase this amount to $15 million, the level at which it has remained for two years.

For the past two years, Teach Florida played a pivotal role in championing security funding through the legislative process in Florida. The
governor and Florida legislature approved funding of $2 million to harden security in at-risk nonpublic schools, including Jewish schools, as part of the state’s 2018-19 budget.

In Pennsylvania, Teach PA spearheaded efforts to include nonpublic schools in this year’s security proposals. With the passage of the 2018-19 state budget, the Office of Safe Schools will offer a $6 million grant program for school police officers at schools, including nonpublic schools—a $2.1 million increase over last year’s allocation. Nonpublic schools may be given priority in awards of new monies, which will ensure that nonpublic school children at risk have a safe and secure education.

Teach NJS helped to create the first-ever line item for security for nonpublic schools in New Jersey by first advocating for the passage of the Safe Schools for All Children ACT in 2016, and then ensuring it was funded at increasing amounts year over year, so that currently New Jersey nonpublic schools receive $75 per student for security. Teach NJS is hopeful that because of the strong foundations that have been built between lay leaders and the legislators, in the coming years nonpublic students will receive equal amounts of funding as public school students so that all children in every school are safe.

STEM FUNDING
This year, New York State’s new budget included an unprecedented $15 million for nonpublic schools in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) reimbursement program. This program, championed by Teach NYS, will increase funding for STEM instruction in nonpublic schools by $10 million—a 200 percent increase over last year’s allocation. Teach NYS made passing and expanding the STEM program the cornerstone of its agenda, and was instrumental in securing the historic reimbursement program for STEM instruction, passed in 2017. It was the first time in the nation’s history that a bill allows the same funding allocated to public schools for STEM industry instruction to go to nonpublic schools. The 2018-19 funding builds upon that success.

This type of funding is truly groundbreaking in nature, as it allows Jewish day schools to be competitive in the hiring of secular studies teachers by offsetting costs when a school hires a certified STEM teacher. This impacts not only the schools’ bottom lines, but also their ability to provide a top-notch STEM education to Jewish students, which will have a long-lasting impact on the success of students in their lives and careers. Teach is in the process of advocating for this funding in other areas across the country and is hopeful that many states will follow suit.

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT PROGRAM
One of the most impactful opportunities for Jewish education has been access to educational tax credit programs. Under this program, individuals and corporations can allocate a predetermined amount of their owed state taxes to scholarship funds, which then are used as financial aid to families with students in grades K-12. These programs can provide millions of dollars in scholarships to families and can be real lifelines for Jewish day schools. If enough students enroll in nonpublic schools through the help of these tax credit programs, states can actually recoup the money lost in owed taxes by saving on the cost of educating students in the public school system.

Since launching in 2016, Teach Florida has successfully advocated for increases in tax credit scholarships. This school year alone, 2,900 Jewish students are attending day schools on $20 million of tax credit and special needs scholarships.

In Pennsylvania, the legislative leadership reaffirmed its commitment to all students by including a $25 million increase for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program (EITC) for a total of $160 million, and they funded the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program (OSTC) at $50 million. Additionally, new parameters will allow more low- and middle-income families to participate. Currently, 40 percent of Jewish day school students in Pennsylvania qualify for and receive scholarships through EITC and OSTC.

For the first time in history, Jewish communities across the country are thinking creatively to help our schools increase financial resources with money from outside the traditional sources (donors, foundations and families). These efforts have been led by diverse, multidenominational teams, and in many states have included partnerships with Muslim and Catholic communities as well. The Teach Advocacy Network looks forward to expanding its efforts to more states and in more arenas to help the Jewish children of today who will become the Jewish leaders of tomorrow.
**Commentary**

**All in the Family?**

Daniel Alter, Head of School, The Moriah School, Englewood, New Jersey:

I fully agree with Rabbi Kastner; nevertheless, I will continue to describe my school environment as a family, even as I am cognizant of the challenges he describes. Every faculty survey I have administered has shown that relationships are a primary motivator for my staff. They live and breathe pride in their school, in part because they feel like part of a family. I recognize that in some ways this complicates my extensive efforts to focus on results, but the tradeoff is worth it. As we say in Hebrew, *Yatza secharo behefseido*. The value of ceasing to describe a school as family may be far less impactful than the cultivation of an environment where all stakeholders are willing to give more than one hundred percent and commit to our school for the long term; because that is what you do for family.

Shaye Gutenberg, Head of School, South Peninsula Hebrew Day School, San Francisco:

I recently had the privilege to tour the corporate offices of Netflix with one of their senior product researchers to learn about their famed culture and how it might help my school. It could be debated how much of what I learned could be useful management techniques for a Jewish day school. However, there was one Netflix statement that really drives home a mantra I use in my school every day. Netflix's Courage statement challenges us to take the best of the family feeling and marry it to the professionalism needed for leading an organization focused on building the next generation of leaders and thinkers. Multitasking: That's what I do.

Jon Ben-Asher, Head of School, Tucson Hebrew Academy:

As we pride ourselves and cherish the closeness we feel as a Jewish day school “family”—and we constantly refer to ourselves this way—these feelings do not eclipse the reality that this family has a boss—a parent, if you will, who must stay objective and do what's best for the school. Who is this parent? It's our mission, vision and values. Community is in there, in big ways. We love and value our community, like family. And, we must honor the mission and make mission-driven decisions, even when it comes to difficult conversations and outcomes. While we care about one another like members of an extended family, our community looks to us to be professional and deliver a great program and amazing experience for our children. To do our best work at this, we must carefully tend to our relationships and maintain a loving yet professional perspective and approach. Balance and keeping the mission front and center help us to continually build a vibrant school culture and climate for all.

Beth Cohen, Head of School, Friedel Jewish Academy, Omaha:

When people ask what I do for a living, I say that I multitask. Few people understand all that the title head of school encompasses, but everyone understands multitasking. As an agent of culture in a school with fewer than 20 employees, one of my roles is to develop a feeling of family—of care, concern and the desire to help bring out the best in everyone—among faculty and staff. But my job as supervisor requires that I put those feelings aside to effectively manage staff with the same care, concern and desire to help bring out the best in everyone as I work toward the best outcomes for the institution.

Kastner speaks to the development of a team that is “built, curated and crafted” different from a family, and that is also my job. My role is to hire exceptional employees and to create a trusting and caring staff culture, to take the best of the family feeling and marry it to the professionalism needed for leading an organization focused on building the next generation of leaders and thinkers. Multitasking: That's what I do.
How a Birthday Cake Changed Our Identity

One morning, I watched a news story about an organization in New England that made a “birthday in a box” for homeless children. I thought, “What a nice idea!” and wondered how hard it was to get that going. We reached out to the organization, but they only served their local community, far from our school in Gainesville, Florida. I mentioned the story to my staff, and we let the idea percolate for a few days. At that time, we were in the process of rethinking our Jewish mission. With that idea in mind, we recognized the birthday box as a beautiful example of the mitzvah of gemilut chasadim.

LESSON ONE: THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.
We reached out to a local homeless shelter, which referred us to a family shelter, and they loved the idea. Together, we agreed that our nursery and preschool classes would take turns baking a birthday cake and making cards to give to a child at the shelter each month. We also asked our families to donate their leftover birthday party supplies—those two goodie bags that never got picked up, the package of napkins that were too much trouble to return. Parents were happy to help; several felt we were doing them a favor “taking this stuff off their hands.” We set up three big Tupperware bins in the office, bought cake mix, and were ready to go.

LESSON TWO: KEEP A WIDE LENS. BE WILLING TO MORPH YOUR IDEA.
And then, no birthdays. It turned out the local shelter wasn’t that big because, thankfully, there are not many homeless families in our area. Although we were thrilled at the lack of homeless children, we were now eager to find a new partner agency. We reached out to the local Ronald McDonald House Charities and told them our idea. We would extend the program to the children of the families staying at the house. And we were off.

Next, I read that parents were forcing children to potty train early, because they couldn’t afford diapers and wipes. I reached out to several other schools to partner this idea, and no one was interested. We discussed it as a staff and reached out to several organizations working with moms with new babies, but most never returned our calls.

Finally, our local mental health provider, which had a residential program for new moms who kept their babies with them while in treatment, jumped at the idea. What started several years ago as a diaper, formula and baby wipes donation drive has morphed into maternity clothes, outgrown toys, books and baby furniture. Last year alone, our school donated more than $4,000 in goods to this program. Again, our parents love it. It provided a wonderful opportunity to talk to their little ones about some children who don’t have a lot of toys and the importance of sharing our things.

Just when we were happy to be helping our larger community, bigger things started to happen we never envisioned. People in the community, both Jewish and not Jewish, started to hear about our school. People who had never heard of our 40-year-old school suddenly said, “You’re the place doing the birthday cakes.” In some cases, this led to more school tours. It also led to invitations to sit on several of these organizations boards, which introduced our school to even more local organizations and businesses. We’ve received community civic awards with an even broader audience.
LESSON THREE: DOING GOOD THINGS CAN HAVE UNEXPECTED BENEFITS.

This flurry of new activity created an identity change within our school. Parents loved the easily comprehensible message to their young children of helping others, tikkun olam. Our two-year-olds understood that the birthday cakes they make and items they donate go to children who are sick or sad. Parents were thrilled when their children come home articulating they made a birthday cake for a boy or girl who was sick. This bigger-picture learning resonated with our families. Our parents even initiated plans to do more involved projects, and they became more active in social action issues.

LESSON FOUR: PEOPLE DO HAVE TIME TO HELP IF THEY FEEL PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE.

After that, we were asked to write a series of articles on family philanthropy for a local, high-end magazine. These pieces raised our exposure to a broader segment of the population. Families who were not engaged in the Jewish community started to enroll; new donors were interested in supporting us.

The next evolution came through our staff. The more we did, the more the staff wanted to do—even on their own time. We set up a committee just to look at the organizations in our area that we might be able to help. It is the most popular of all our school committees. Each month, they meet to choose an organization. Sometimes our help is purely financial, like when the Jewish day schools in Houston had hurricane damage, but most of the time we focus on local charities. We’ve helped more than a dozen organizations every year since.

Next year, our teachers are volunteering to go in pairs at night to teach a family activity. Many of them are nervous to speak in front of adults, so this was a perfect vehicle to gain public speaking experience while helping others. When you make playdough every day, it’s not so scary to teach others how to do it, and these families, perhaps at a domestic violence shelter, welcome a fun, relaxed way to engage with their children. Now, our interviewing process for new staff includes a question about volunteering. It has become such a large part of our identity that we now seek out others who have the same passion.

LESSON FIVE: PEOPLE FROM UNLIKELY PLACES NOTICE WHEN YOU ARE DOING GOOD THINGS.

Several years later, we are known in our community as a place to send your child if you have a passion for civic leadership and social action. Our story has become entwined with the stories that our partner agencies tell about their work in the community. Our relationships with these organizations have not only allowed us to help many of the underserved in our community but also helped us to identify what our school’s most important Jewish values are. All from a birthday cake.
BALANCING THE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN AND ENDOWMENT BUILDING

WE WANT TO BUILD ENDOWMENT BUT WE ARE STRUGGLING TO FUNDRAISE TO COVER OUR ANNUAL EXPENSES. HOW DO WE BALANCE OUR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SECURITY WITH OUR SHORT-TERM CONCERNS?

Dana Maze Ehrlich  
Member, Stephen Wise Temple Board of Directors; Alumni Parent Chair, Wise School Generations Endowment, Los Angeles

We typically encourage a child to stick with a difficult assignment; raising funds for both annual giving and endowment is no different. Take a moment to assess your obstacles and make space to see your opportunities. It’s important that endowment is deemed a priority by your board and school leadership. Staff and lay leaders give time and talent and deserve nothing less than to work on an initiative that is highly valued. Consider reorganizing so that your core endowment team is different from your core annual giving team. Each should be informed about the other, yet a dedicated team will keep your school’s endowment goals on track. It is equally imperative for your core team to delegate certain tasks and asks to others (such as a board member, active parent, an alum) who are better suited.

Often, the fundraising strain comes from viewing your endowment donor pool solely from your school families. Cast a wider net for your list of donor prospects. Have you considered alumni? Parents of alumni? Grandparents? Local Jewish community leaders? Recognize that there are people within your community who can serve as connectors and advocates to grow your school’s endowment. Ask parents, staff and board members who else shares your vision within and beyond the school community. Nanette Fridman of Fridman Strategies sums it up: “When you invite them to donate, you give them an opportunity to live their values and make their dreams come true.”

Michael Rubin  
Past Board President, Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, St. Louis

My experience is that one can actually help the other. Many sophisticated donors actually like the idea of being asked to give to short-term operating needs and the long-term picture through endowment. The key is knowing the giving history and likes/dislikes of the potential donor, making an appointment to see that person, and using language like, “You’ve been caring and generous with your annual support in the past, which has allowed us to provide scholarships, acquire technology, and retain and attract the best faculty. But we’d also like to ensure that our school will be financially sound for children in the next generation. So we’re launching an endowment effort to raise $X million. Those funds will generate a permanent stream of annual income to respond to unforeseen opportunities, building maintenance and other priorities. It’s vital to do both. We respectfully ask you to consider maintaining your annual support while investing in the future of our school with a special endowment gift of $Y, to be fulfilled over a five-year period.”

So it’s common to ask for an annual gift and an endowment gift at the same time—and we’ve seen success with a well-thought-through approach for both. Our school launched a $5 million endowment campaign through the Prizmah Generations program, while continuing to raise nearly $1 million for annual support. The endowment effort is at $4.2 million and approaching goal.

Pesha Isenberg  
Board Member and Endowment Chair, Torah Day School, Atlanta

Struggling to fundraise enough to cover annual expenses is a common theme among day schools. The annual fund provides the vital financial infusion that schools need to survive on a daily basis, and the belief that this is the most important revenue stream is deeply ingrained. However, an endowment is no less important to the school’s fiscal health; working toward long-term financial security and managing short-term concerns don’t have to be mutually exclusive. The first step in achieving endowment success is to educate people on its vital importance. People who care about the school now and are annual fund donors will naturally care about its survival in the future. It’s never too late to start an endowment. Today’s endowment donors can enable the future vision that all of the school supporters dream of seeing.

While cash gifts are always appreciated and important, they aren’t essential for building endowments. Endowment giving can take many forms. Donors can make legacy gifts by contributing an IRA or life insurance policy, or by including the school in a will. Educating donors who already support the school and believe in its mission on the different ways of giving can help to achieve the school’s long-term endowment goals without detracting from annual fundraising.

In addition, some school supporters who can’t currently afford to donate to the annual fund at all or at the level they would like can still be significant endowment donors, making them feel like they can make an impact. Suggesting endowment giving to these donors as an option will create a deeper connection between the donor and institution. It’s win-win. Endowment building and annual fundraising are really just two sides of the same coin and complement each other beautifully when done right.
YOUR SCHOOL BELONGS HERE

The Prizmah Network
Look at all we can do together.

Visit prizmah.org/network or contact network@prizmah.org to see why Prizmah is where your school belongs.
Collaboration for Transformation: Young and Old

Bridging Jewish generations can be a transformative experience for both young and old, yet a lack of access, time and funding often limit such interactions and opportunities. Many of our students do not have regular, meaningful contact with the older generation, and many Jewish elderly do not have young family or interactions with children in the local Jewish community. Research shows that elderly adults experience great positive effects from intergenerational programs, including increased connectedness, cognitive awareness and feelings of self-worth, along with reduced sense of isolation. Children experience a deeper appreciation for and connection with our culture, history and traditions, in a way that extends far beyond classroom learning. But with all that goes into optimizing our education and building a sense of community within our school, how do we add intergenerational programming, or any extra-organizational collaborations, for that matter?

Our school, Irvine Hebrew Day School, accomplished this by developing an intergenerational collaborative program with Heritage Pointe, a senior living facility. Our partnership has modeled how well-executed collaborations can achieve shared goals, maximize funding, increase community awareness and support of both organizations, and in our case, build and expand successful intergenerational programming, which has had a powerful impact on those involved.

Successful collaborations between two organizations begin with motivated leaders and a common purpose. However, for such collaborations to thrive, there needs to be a foundation of interpersonal relationships among all stakeholders framed by positive attitudes, trust, effective communication, parallel momentum, flexibility and a belief in the essential importance of the collaborative effort. When we began the collaboration, each person involved recognized the importance of bringing positive energy to every interaction, establishing respectful, open and compassionate communication, and focusing on nurturing meaningful connections between all participants, including administrators, staff, students and residents.

This program began with funding from our local Jewish Community Foundation, which is committed to supporting collaboration among community institutions. We surveyed the hopes and needs of the students and residents, carefully evaluating the survey outcomes, approaching every decision with flexibility and thinking creatively about programming—factors that have helped us to navigate emerging challenges as they develop.

Irvine Hebrew Day School and Heritage Pointe have worked successfully over the past year to pilot Project Elef Dor (Thousand Generations). The program objectives are to purposefully link the Jewish generations of Orange County, California, by building a sense of community identity and connection. Our goals include promoting transmission of history and traditions, inspiring our elder generation to have hope in our Jewish future, promoting positive attitudes towards aging, and providing companionship and joyful Jewish experiences for our seniors. Throughout the nine-month project, we held five intergenerational Jewish-themed events such as matzah-cover making, an interactive klezmer concert, Chanukah celebratory singing and even a LEGO engineering experience, a specific request of both the seniors and students.

Administrators and educators from both institutions developed a program that involved engaging Jewish activities, and simultaneously created a rubric for assessing the success of each individual program and the program as a whole. Participants from both communities were surveyed so that we could evaluate the personal outcomes following each event (what each person walked away with, what was the emotional impact, what did they learn), how connected they felt to their “buddies,” and what they hoped to see moving forward. We found that our students began to view the older generation as a source of knowledge and bridge to our past, and our older participants were most moved by the companionship of Jewish children. Irvine Hebrew Day School and Heritage Pointe continue to assess the program successes and challenges, and we have made adjustments based on feedback from the participants and from the staff.

On one visit of 12 students to their senior friends at Heritage Pointe, Elijah, a third grader, created a matzah cover with paint pens, floral appliques and Jewish stencil motifs. While he and his buddy Esther worked alongside each other, they gave each other advice on color and design options, as Elijah listened intently to remarkable stories from Europe during the time of the Holocaust. The following visit, Miriam sat with Morty, one of the founders of the State of Israel, who shared his experiences building one of the first kibbutzim. As they exchanged tiny Lego pieces and grappled with building a “paper crinkling machine” made entirely of Legos, they giggled as they got their machine to work.

Although not initially intended, this collaboration extended beyond intergenerational programming. When Irvine Hebrew Day School was considering successful fundraising models, we turned to the pioneers of Heritage Pointe’s Diamond Donors program, in which members support the organization through a 10-year pledge. The Diamond Donor founders supported Irvine Hebrew Day School in developing a similar model, called the Golden Circle. Irvine Hebrew Day School became Diamond Donor members, and members of Heritage Pointe joined the Golden Circle, each institution pledging to donate to the other for 10 years, demonstrating our long-term commitment to one another. After the inaugural Golden Circle luncheon, excitement and momentum quickly led to the launch of the Grandparents Club, in which our school grandparents have become more active participants in general school events and take on leadership roles in event planning.

When we thoughtfully utilize our resources in a way that is consistent with our organizational values, the whole community reaps the rewards. At Irvine Hebrew Day School and Heritage Pointe, we were united by a belief that our elder generation and our children are precious resources and community treasures, and joining the two groups brings extraordinary benefit to both. This collaboration taught our children many things about our Jewish history that could not be learned in a classroom and gave the older generation a window into our bright Jewish future. We built a community greater than the sum of its parts.
JONATHAN GERSTL

Jewish camps and Jewish day schools each serve essential and overlapping functions in the development of Jewish youth, but for the most part these experiences are siloed and unconnected. The potential for productive collaboration, however, is vast.
Camps Airy and Louise are the only brother-sister Jewish overnight camps in the country, and have been in existence for almost a century. They seek to provide Jewish children in grades 2 through 12 from all economic backgrounds with opportunities for self-growth and life skills that enhance their Jewish identity in a single-gender environment, while creating friendships that last a lifetime. Recently, they have been working to create partnerships with Jewish day schools with three primary objectives:

1. To show children that their Jewish identity extends beyond their school day and into the wider world around them.
2. To enable students to live out Jewish values such as tikkun olam and tzedakah experientially.
3. To allow students to experience the ruach that is at the heart of the camp experience and to learn that having pride in your Jewish identity is not only important but fun.

We partner with several day schools, mostly in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern United States. The Jewish experience is particularly different in smaller Southern communities, without the support networks often found in the larger Jewish centers of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. By providing their students with a strong network of other Jewish children from all over the world (22 states and five different countries), we are able to help schools extend their vision in both time and space. What their students learn during the year continues throughout the summer, and by engaging with other Jewish children they often learn new traditions and enhance their Jewish identity in ways that complement their school experience. At camp, living in a complete Jewish environment provides a critical piece of Jewish education.

Many of the Jewish day schools with which we partner provide a strong Jewish foundation; it’s critical that students’ Jewish life and learning be reinforced through the summer months. Our partnership with Lerner Day School, located in Durham, North Carolina, for example, is designed specifically to meet this need. As part of an ongoing sponsorship, directors from Airy & Louise visit the school annually and talk with both parents and campers about the Jewish camping experience.

As a Jewish summer camp, we focus every week on teaching different Jewish values, middot. We recognize campers for exhibiting values such as kindness, hospitality and patience,
and reward them with positive reinforcement during Shabbat by lighting candles, participating in services and receiving recognition in front of the entire camp. At Camp Airy, our "Mensch on the Bench" reinforces positive values with prime seating at the front of services each Shabbat.

In our partnership with Krieger Schechter Day School in Baltimore, we bring this camp experience in promoting Jewish values into the school itself. Several times during the year, we work alongside other Jewish camps to help educate students about different holidays and the traditions that surround them. We also have days where the camps are invited to conduct a service project for the students. For instance, we create Blessing Bags of toiletry items (toothpaste, sunscreen, lip balm, etc.) with the students for them to keep in their cars and give out when they encounter people who may need them. We may make soup mixes or trail mix to distribute to homeless shelters for those who are hungry. These service projects reinforce an essential part of students' Jewish identity.

Pride in Jewish identity and tradition is not always an easy thing to grow. Jewish children are often a minority, and they may encounter negative stereotypes in sports and other areas. While attending private Jewish day schools may alleviate this problem, without ruach, it's difficult to imagine the next generation developing a strong Jewish sense of self. Our partnership with the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Maryland, is designed to specifically address this area by supporting their annual Intercamp Sports Competition.

The school organizes its own “Olympic Games” each year, and they decided to involve multiple summer camp partners to organize various teams. The teams aren't limited to students at the school; camps are invited to bring in anyone currently attending to compete. The competition is held on a weekend in order to encourage participation from as many Jewish campers in the region as possible. By partnering in this way, not only does the school gain the benefit of additional competitors and a sense of competing pride from each camp, but also recognizes that the Jewish summer camp experience is a critical piece of the year-round Jewish educational curriculum.

In addition to our staff and campers visiting Jewish day schools during the school year, there is a reciprocal relationship during the summer months. Many of our day school partners visit our camps during the summer, checking in with their students and reinforcing the continuity of a Jewish education. By combining our resources, we offer students a much broader experience and enhance their Jewish identity in ways that neither organization could offer alone. By focusing on the three areas of identity, values and spirit, we are able to catalyze resources and help grow the next generation of committed Jewish adults.

Prizmah recently conducted a survey of cash endowments at Jewish day schools across the US and Canada. With 140 day schools responding, the survey indicates that total cash endowment funds exceed $500 million. Of the respondents, 96 had a cash endowment of $100,000 or more; most of the others had no endowment whatsoever. The mean (average) endowment of the 96 schools was $5.1 million, and the median (middle) was $2.2 million. The large gap between mean and median is attributable to the fact that the top 10 schools in the survey had an average endowment of approximately $27 million, a number that skews the mean upwards. While nearly 200 Jewish day schools did not respond to the survey, Prizmah estimates the total cash endowment at these schools at no more than $50 million. This suggests a total cash endowment of $500-$550 million for the entire Jewish day school field.

Day school endowments have more than doubled over the past decade. This is a function of the success of endowment-building programs such as Prizmah's Generations program, Life & Legacy (a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation) and both communal and individual school endowment campaigns. The more than 40 schools that have participated in Generations have raised in excess of $100 million in cash or legacy gifts since the program’s inception in 2011. Life & Legacy offers incentive funds to a variety of Jewish organizations, including approximately 50 day schools, in an effort to garner more legacy gifts.

Communal endowment funds have also experienced significant growth. Though not included in our survey, Prizmah estimates that communal funds throughout the US and Canada total at least $300 million. Communal endowment funds are often shepherded by local federations or central agencies (prominent funds exist in Los Angeles, Montreal, MetroWest NJ, Boston and Chicago) and are most often used to fund efforts around academic excellence and middle-income affordability and to incentivize further school-level endowment growth.

It is worth noting that the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) recommends that its schools target an endowment of at least $20,000 per student. Our mean is below this level, and our median is well below this level. The top 50 independent schools possess an endowment that ranges from $50 million to more than $1 billion. Not one Jewish day school possesses an endowment in that range.

We have come a long way, but there is still a long way to go.
Implementing Design Thinking in Partnership with a University

SHARA PETERS
LAUREN QUIENT

In 2015, our school wanted to breathe new life into our traditional curriculum. With a change in leadership came new expertise, first in project-based learning (PBL) and second in design thinking, methods which gave birth to a new curriculum and core philosophy. They also inspired a longer-term vision to be a pioneer in design thinking education for Jewish day schools.

Design thinking is a five-step process that starts with the need to solve a problem, anything from creating the next rocket to reach far-off galaxies, to figuring out a way to improve a family routine at home. Design thinking is so well-suited for our school because of the added ingredient of empathy; the design thinking process starts by thinking from the perspective of the “user,” so the entire experience is framed through the thoughts and emotions of another. Jewish values should ultimately guide us to use a process like design thinking to gain a deeper understanding of the world around us and challenge us to try to make a difference.

Shifting the pedagogic practices of a faculty of dedicated, veteran teachers required expert guidance. Realizing the need for a sustained relationship with a professional development practitioner who could help our teachers grow and develop in these new areas, we turned to the source of design thinking in schools: the Stanford University d.school’s K12 Lab Network. Ariel Raz and Devon Young, two Stanford team members, were excited to partner with us in thinking about how to bring the design thinking mindset to a Jewish day school. The collaboration we envisioned consisted of one full-day workshop led by Devon and Ariel at our school in August of 2017,
followed by once-a-month virtual coaching, and a second in-person workshop in May 2018.

The August full-day workshop allowed us to specify goals and define terms. It enabled us to feel invigorated and passionate about the work ahead. Soon, however, the realities of working within the scheduling and time constraints of a day school set in. The momentum that we gained in August took a bit of a downturn during the fall chagigim, as events on the school calendar made it difficult to find time for meaningful, regular check-ins with the d.school team.

We shifted our model from direct virtual coaching of faculty to a “train-the-trainer” model. Devon and Ariel coached Lauren Quient, our academic director, and she brought what she learned to the teachers during their regular faculty meetings. With the time pressures lifted, we discovered that, despite our efforts, we had not yet succeeded in incorporating design thinking in the classroom setting.

We also realized that though we had been thinking of PBL and design thinking as two sides of the same coin, we needed to separate the concepts. While project-based learning is a pedagogy with connected elements that cannot stand on their own, design thinking is a process and a mindset. As a mindset, design thinking permeates everything that we do. Any time we ask our students to work together, to take on a problem, to try something again after a failed attempt, to create something new, we are asking them to think like a designer. Since uncovering this, we have shifted our language and pedagogy away from PBL to design thinking.

With the right professional development in place and the educational methodology that best suited our vision, we then took to the work of creating a unique “ADAT mindset” that would support all of this good work at Adat Ari El Day School. We needed to uncover where the core of our school intersected with the stages of design thinking, how design thinking reflected our Jewish values, and how our mission reflected this new direction while honoring our past and being visionary about the future.

With the support of our d.school partners, we developed the following resources to support this endeavor:

- We created a project planner that put empathy at the forefront of every design challenge by asking the question, “For whom are we designing?” By clearly articulating our user, our projects focused on that user’s need.
- Especially with our youngest students, maintaining a “bias of doing,” meaning when students experiment immediately with solutions rather than thinking hypothetically about whether or not something will work, is crucial when creating opportunities for them to learn how to be empathetic and think from the perspective of another. For example, we allow our students to prototype ideas from their perspective, then provide opportunities to gather feedback from the user—one who might engage with their prototype. Modifying their ideas to fit their user, rather than beginning with their user in mind, allowed for thoughtful consideration of someone else’s perspective in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Previously, many of the methods we used to build empathy employed observation and interview. These methods are useful for older students but require skills beyond what
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In their recent book *The Power of Moments*, brothers Chip and Dan Heath throw down a gauntlet for educators and leaders alike. “We all have defining moments in our lives—meaningful experiences that stand out in our memory. ... Defining moments shape our lives, but we don’t have to wait for them to happen. We can be the authors of them.”

The Heath brothers’ challenge struck me. Authoring such defining or peak experiences in schools is not always so easy in a school setting. I often ask students about highlights of their school year; they regularly mention retreats, trips, community service and experiential learning among their most meaningful experiences. But what about the classroom? What would it take to create a peak experience in the Jewish studies classroom?

Last fall, with this question in mind, I jumped at the opportunity to help create the first-ever middle school Moot Beit Din program. Moot Beit Din has long been a powerful and successful program at the high school level, where students explore a modern ethical or legal issue through the lens of classic rabbinic texts. Could it work with middle schoolers as well?

The answer was unequivocally yes. Over the course of nine months, I collaborated with colleagues from six different schools to plan the inaugural competition using monthly video conferences and a battery of Google Docs. Our group chose to reuse the 2015 Moot Beit Din case that centered on an offensive Snapchat during a school election. My students began to pore over the material, familiarizing themselves with the
different texts. To my surprise, they were fascinated by the case and its complexity, puzzling over the 11th century *takana* of Rabbeinu Gershom that banned opening someone else’s mail.

We also decided to tweak the Moot Beit Din format to provide the appropriate scaffolding for middle school students. We identified two main sides of the argument and assigned groups of students to one side or the other. (In the high school competition, students are free to choose and tailor their argument.) Teams would submit a written component before the competition and present their arguments at Moot Beit Din in front of judges and an opposing team (including time for rebuttal, which was quite popular with students). After this initial round, we planned for a “final four,” in which the top four teams would compete in front of everyone to decide the overall winner.

Finally, after many months of preparation, I found myself on a bus with a colleague and 25 of my eighth-grade students, en route to Orange County. The scene there, just days before Shavuot, was revelatory: nearly 200 people, 160 students along with judges and teachers, gathered for the Middle School Moot Beit Din competition. Five Southern California day schools participated (Heschel, Milken, Pressman Academy, Tarbut V’Torah Community Day School and San Diego Jewish Academy), with Kinneret Day School joining via video conference from New York.

The day itself was filled with energy and a deep engagement with Torah. For me, the highlight was seeing my students and others passionately engaging with the judges about deep and complex Jewish legal questions. Additionally, it was truly a joy to collaborate with colleagues from so many different schools. Our creative partnership ensured that it wasn’t just a peak experience for the students but for the professionals as well.

The week after the competition, back in the classroom, I offered my students a chance to reflect and distill their learning. The results were quite moving, as one of my students eloquently expressed: “I have reconnected with my Jewish values, and I have learned how to use different Jewish texts to help me solve my own problems. I know that I will be able to use these texts throughout my whole life.”

We all want to create peak experiences that instill in our students a true love of Torah and a deep attachment to Judaism. Moot Beit Din did just that. It was an inspiring and rigorous learning experience that culminated with a communal celebration. Our students are eager to engage with sophisticated Jewish texts, and the real-life case of an inappropriate Snapchat allowed students to connect deeply to the material at hand.

We’re already planning the 2nd Annual Southern California Middle School Moot Beit Din Competition for the spring of 2019. I hope you’ll consider joining us, or even better, start your own local middle school Moot Beit Din.
Student-Created Resources in Our Schools
The Buddy Bench Unites Children at Recess

There is a popular saying that comes from Psalm 89:3: Olam chesed yibaneh, The world is built on chesed. It is this teaching that inspired the student government at our school to use their own hands to build a physical conduit for chesed within the school community: the Buddy Bench.

Towards the end of the school year, our first grade teacher and student government advisor, Rachel Shar, received an email from a second grade representative on the student government with a link to a video about the “We Dine Together” student-led movement (#wedinetogether). We Dine Together is an initiative that was created by a Haitian immigrant high school student in Boca Raton, Florida. He remembered his feelings of isolation at lunchtime when he first came to the United States and created a movement of inclusion so that no student feels alone at lunchtime. The teacher was moved by this video and knew that this initiative was something that could be very worthwhile to the student body, even though Ohr Chadash Academy is an elementary school.

Rachel showed the student government the video at a meeting, and the children immediately began brainstorming. After eating lunch together, students go outside for recess, where they play sports games or break into groups, where some students can be left out.

Taking inspiration from the We Dine Together Movement, the school’s Buddy Bench was born. A Buddy Bench (there are now two) is strategically placed where a child can sit if he or she is feeling left out or simply in need of a friend at recess time. The goal is that when other children see someone on the bench, they will approach and include the child in their game.

After deciding on the concept, the student government members created a timeline and made sure that the benches were made. A parent volunteer built the benches, and the students painted and wrote positive words of affirmation on the benches. “Olam Chased Yibaneh/The world was built on kindness, Choose Kind, Love, You Rock, Everyone Counts, Ahava” and other catch phrases were included to drive home the message that the bench is for caring and for inclusion.

After the bench was ready for implementation, Dr. Rebecca Friedman, professor of education at Towson University and a school parent, held a training for the members of the student government to provide a framework for how they could effectively lead their peers to utilize the Buddy Bench. The children engaged in role playing to address different scenarios that might occur and practiced responding in an appropriate manner.

The middle school members of student government created a video explaining the purpose of the Buddy Bench, what recess might have looked like before and after the Buddy Bench for a child who was feeling left out, and how to handle some specific Buddy Bench scenarios.

The Buddy Benches were unveiled to the entire school at a Rosh Chodesh assembly with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and screening of the video. Students were so moved by the new addition to the school that they broke into spontaneous song and dance. Rachel has received multiple emails from her fellow teachers who have observed the Buddy Bench being used during recess time. In particular, younger children who might have lacked the gumption or communication skills to convey their emotions to their classmates now have an effective means to signal that they are feeling down or left out.

It is, of course, every school’s and every parent’s dream that something like a Buddy Bench need not exist. By ingraining an understanding in young children that they should be mindful of their surroundings at times where others might not feel a part of the group, we are hopeful that the lessons of the Buddy Bench will remain with students as a model for living their lives with chesed toward others.
Each year, all of our classes create collaborative art pieces that are used in our benefit’s silent auction. The artworks raise money for the school while showcasing the creative abilities of our current students to all of the stakeholders in our community. Since our student body population consists of three-month-olds through sixth graders, the pieces created for this event are varied and unique. Sometimes the pieces we auction off are one-of-a-kind and go for hundreds of dollars, and other times classes create pieces that are reproducible and go home to many lucky owners.

A few years ago, our first grade students made a mixed media piece that truly amazed everyone: a black-and-white photo showing themselves on our schoolyard, each standing in a “painting position.” Students superimposed their own watercolor paintings onto the image, creating the illusion of painting in color on a black-and-white background. They printed the final product on canvas, enabling multiple purchases at the benefit. The piece displayed our elementary schoolyard, a beloved part of our physical facility where students have recess, participate in PE and take part in all of our outdoor celebrations and community events. The students’ watercolor pieces reflected our dynamic art program, and their expressive poses demonstrated our school’s cultivation of individual creativity. It was then no surprise that when this unique piece of artwork hit our silent auction, our community members were awed and eager to bid.

Our development staff and art faculty sensed that this piece would be popular from the beginning. They set a price of $360, and throughout the evening six community members were eager to purchase it, whether or not they had students in the class. A few actively engaged families decided that the piece had to be displayed proudly in the school. They purchased one that they donated back, which was immediately hung in the admissions office.

To this day, prospective parents are impressed by a product that reflects the quality and values of our educational offerings. The admissions staff tell the story of engaged families coming together to purchase it for the office, thus conveying the warmth and connectedness of our community while complimenting our students’ work.

On the night of our benefit, this collaborative art piece brought in around $2,000, but it has since contributed so much more. As an object that embodies our education and community, it lives and breathes in our admissions office. It has motivated teachers to create reproducible pieces that appeal to community members outside of our parent body. It has set the bar high and created a new approach to the collaborative pieces that have always been a staple at our silent auction. Finally, as the students (and their parents) move up in our elementary program, they come back to this piece and are reminded of all the ways they have grown—physically, spiritually and intellectually.
Last year, our faculty were trained in Project Based Learning instructional strategies. During the professional development, the teachers were inspired by examples of amazing student accomplishments through PBL but were concerned about the challenge of working with young children on such large tasks. The teachers in grades K-3 decided to take on the challenge collaboratively by having their students create an outdoor learning space on the school balcony that was currently bare.

The Balcony Garden PBL Group presented students with the question, “How can we make the outdoor balcony into a useful learning space?” Working in mixed age groups, students met weekly to come up with ideas for the balcony area that would make learning outside something everyone in our school could enjoy. After several weeks of research and discussions, the students created a presentation of their ideas to share with the whole group. The group decided phase 1 would include outdoor furniture and learning materials, a butterfly garden and a fountain with a rock garden. Each grade level was assigned a task to implement and during the winter months the students worked on a plan for their space.

As we began this project, a teacher concern was the loss of instructional time. Our general studies program is only 60% of the day, so time management is essential. Teachers quickly found that much of the math, technology, science and language arts curriculum was easily integrated into the project. We also realized that the project held enormous value for the students by teaching them how to use skills learned in the classroom in real-life situations. The students conducted research mostly with the use of technology and recorded their findings in Google Documents and Google Slides, which were easily shared with teachers and students.

Students worked to produce a budget for the project’s materials and raised funds in a variety of ways. They also needed to conduct, check and consider measurements of space and weight in the planning stages. The PBL instructional strategy offered many opportunities for the classes to read and write about what they were doing. One class even published and printed a book about the butterfly garden that they incorporated into the school balcony.

In the spring, the groups came back together and were ready to build the balcony garden using their designs. The students began to transform the space into a comfortable and useful community garden. With some furniture, a rug and a whiteboard, classes can conduct lessons within the space. The butterfly garden was designed with the needs of Monarch butterflies in mind. In order to incorporate the whole community, everyone in the school hand painted a rock to add to the rock and fountain space. This project continues into the new school year, as the students come together and design Phase 2 of our Balcony Garden.

The group celebrated the opening of the school balcony garden and invited the entire school to come and enjoy the newly created learning space. Thanks to the students’ hard work and the support of our school and families, students successfully created a functional outdoor learning space. The students are excited to continue this project. We are all eager to see what else our students can create and how our garden will continue to grow.
My colleague Mo Fisch, a Jewish studies teacher, and I were awarded a Teacher Institute for the Arts grant for the purpose of creating a learning project for our middle school students that combined the visual arts with Jewish education. In consultation with administrators, we decided to challenge our seventh grade students to make artistic changes to the Beit Tefillah, our school’s dedicated prayer space, which would enhance their spiritual connection to the space during services. They were asked to reflect upon how or where they connected to God and prayer, and what elements inspired those feelings. They then investigated ways to incorporate these ideas into the current space. The project had two foundational goals: to combine Jewish studies and artmaking, and to be student-driven.

The project continued to be developed during a weeklong seminar, for our cohort of art and Jewish studies teachers from all over the country, designed and facilitated by Kol HaOt, an education and arts organization centered in Israel. Sessions led by artist David Moss, Elyssa Rabinowitz and a staff of talented mentors left us well prepared and supported. We returned home with several Kol HaOt toolkits—Synectics, Text to Symbol and Middot (Values)—to share with the school and enough excitement to see this project through.

Synectics is a condensed “creative” problem solving process that helps speed up the natural process of finding new ideas from unexpected places. First, the problem is defined in detail and obvious solutions are discarded. A fun brainstorm called “the problem as understood” generates wild word connections. These words are then narrowed down, used in improv skits and, through the careful recording of key concepts, a new possibility is presented.

The second toolkit, Text to Symbol, is a process of interpreting text by assigning key elements of a text different colors. Then each section of the text is depicted by a series of shapes. The struggle and deep learning comes from deciding how to tell the story through the shape itself. The learning really happens in the process of making.

The first semester, students chose to create a series of paintings about animals in the Torah and Jewish teaching. The students chose text to study and researched the actual qualities of each animal. At first, their images of the animals were very literal. Over time, they began to focus in on the different qualities of their animals, zooming in on their drawings, cropping the edges of the images so that just the parts of the animal spoke to the text.

In the second semester, a new group of students created images based on the theme of Holiness, of place, time and soul, using an essay on this subject from Adin Steinsaltz’s Thirteen Petalled Rose. The class chose to work with the idea of the five senses as a basis for their images for the Beit Tefillah. The whole seventh grade class focused on the concept of holiness for several weeks before the art rotation began, and this set the foundation.

The students worked in small groups and chose to paint or print their images depending on the medium that they enjoy most. The painters had to work through the same process as the first semester’s students of finding images that they felt strongly represented their own ideas, but which would also work as a whole. Other students choose to make besamim bags, with block-printed images or painted washing bowls for the Beit Tefillah, with symbols from the Pesach story. Playlists for soundtracks and a challah cover with decorated kiddush cups completed the senses of sound and taste.

As they prepared their writings for presentation, many of the students were surprised to discover that the process of designing and creating their images led them to understand the text in different, richer ways. The real gift of this project is that the students were empowered to express their learning through the art they designed, which served to expand the beauty and student ownership of the school’s prayer space. The toolboxes designed and passed on through Kol HaOt allowed the artwork to be a true expression of a journey and deep interaction with Jewish text through the medium of art.
What can kindness look like? What can we do to spread acts of kindness? How can we lead others to “choose kind”? Our young leaders in student government asked themselves these questions as a result of our school’s reading of *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. The book was our faculty summer read. In September, students were greeted with a bulletin board displaying the words “When given the choice between being right and being kind, choose kind,” a quote made famous by the book. Teachers shared the book with students as a read-aloud through the year, and the resultant conversations took place during Darchei Noam, our social-emotional development curriculum. Kindness quickly took root. Students brought in personal copies of *Wonder* to read on their own. Families purchased the book at our book fairs. Teachers challenged students to write original precepts and posted them around school.

Our student government was moved by what was taking place and wanted to take on kindness as a theme for their work. After being inspired by a “Kindness Generator” shown to them by our makerspace teacher, they began to brainstorm how to move beyond talking. Enter coding. All students at Perelman learn to code. As a modality of creative expression, we consider coding to be as valuable a skill as writing.

Our student leaders got to work on a coding project to help others actively “choose kind.” Using Scratch, a visual programming language created by the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab, students created an interactive game called The Kindness Wheel. A single click causes an animated wheel to spin several times, then randomly stop at a “spoke” labeled with an act of kindness (like “Hold the door” or “Make a new friend”). Student leaders spent meetings identifying ways for our community to be kind, creating the art and writing the code. The students decided that the best way to share their work was to record this game in action and include it in their weekly video to the school community, thereby announcing the “Kind” for the week.

This tool now exists for our new student leaders. Who is to say if they will use it exactly as designed? Maybe they will change the art. Maybe they will “look under the hood” and adjust the code so others experience it directly as a video game. Perhaps they’ll develop a different tool to help others be kind. The beauty of this project is that students used their coding skills to create a personally meaningful project. The deep, creative thinking that came as a result of the values and skills our community upholds and puts into action lives beyond this one group of young leaders.
A Primer in Campus Rentals
Rental income can supplement almost any school’s budget. While you do have to own your property, with some preparatory work and following important business practices, renting can be a great asset to your school. The initial goal is additional direct revenue, and rentals often bring the added benefit of opening your campus up to many others who wouldn’t normally have been there, potentially drawing students who otherwise may not have come to you. Large or small, your school too can have a rental income program.
When we moved into our new campus six years ago, deToledo High School (dTHS) decided to establish a rental program that built upon one that had already existed at the site. Our new six-acre campus included two educational buildings, an auditorium, gym and indoor pool, providing ample rental opportunities. With research, board guidance and policies and procedures, our school has developed a robust program that brings in approximately $350,000 annually from a swim school (70%), youth and adult sports groups (20%), and groups using our premises for Shabbat, High Holidays and Sunday school (10%). Additionally, at least twice a month, government groups such as neighborhood councils and the police department use our facilities at no charge.

Most important for dTHS is that school events, planned in advance, always take precedence over potential rentals. The key to this campus synergy is communication with all those who book school events. From time to time a last-minute school event or an “I forgot to calendar” event occurs. Our contract does allow for late cancellations, but this is something that we try hard to avoid since changing rental agreements can erode the success of the program and the trust of the greater community.

**INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As you consider whether your school will undertake a policy of renting facilities, here are some important questions to consider. The first and most important questions to ask are, Is renting a valuable proposition, and what are fair expectations for the first year? You’ll need to know if your school has the initial foundation and services to support this venture that not only can be financially promising but also fun. If properly controlled by knowing your expenses, the school can make money even that first year.

Other key initial considerations include:

- Do you have a facility that people want to rent?
- What policies should your school adopt?
- How do you set yourself up for success, not headaches and failure?
- What should you charge? What documentation is needed?
- Legally, what do you need to be concerned about?
- Do you have the staffing that can manage not only the process but support the actual rental?

Gathered from schools across the nation, here are some best practices and items to consider relating to school rental income.

**GETTING STARTED**

Your board’s facilities and finance committees will need to verify the desirability of rental income and then adopt policies and procedures regarding the following: Which rooms are you going to rent? Who are going to be the key staff/admin in charge of rentals? Your school’s senior business officer and director of facilities together should create the policies and procedures that will be adopted by the board. Once approved, the responsibility for arranging rentals and officially coordinating time and availability should ideally be that of one staff person to allow for better controls.

**Value.** What is the perceived value of your rental? Your perceived value = your rates, what you feel are fair charges. Customer expectations are the room and maybe chairs and tables. Additional and important substantiation of what you charge can include how your facilities look and the customer service afforded to visitors. These can set you aside as a “preferred rental location.”

**Mission appropriateness.** It is important to establish the type of organization that you will/won’t/prefer to rent to. Are you renting only to Jewish groups? Educational groups? As a school, one of your preferred groups for consideration might be those who include, or know, prospective students.

**Corporate status.** Is there a governmental entity that mandates the renter must be a corporation? If so, obtaining proof of corporate status is important.

**Taxation.** Does your county, state or other governmental area tax your income or property if you rent to specific types of organizations? As an example, California nonprofit schools can only rent to other nonprofits or they will lose their property tax exemption. For this purpose, rentals must be an IRS 501(c)3 and not an organization that is in the process of getting this status, or what is sometimes heard, “Well, we don’t make any money so we are a nonprofit.” Organizational proof of IRS nonprofit status can be found at apps.irs.gov/app/eos/ or on the Guidestar website. Additionally, for revenue and taxation purposes, a “donation” instead of a fee is really the same thing. If audited, an agency can find that you were given money for services.

**Insurance.** A Certificate with Additional Insured status and endorsements is best practice. Your broker can provide a document to pass on to a potential renter that includes specific insurance limits and language.

**Risk management.** What risk is your board willing to accept in rentals? If your taxing authority allows non-corporate rentals, does your board wish to rent to a “pickup basketball” group, a birthday party using the gym or the beit midrash for a bar mitzvah? Are they willing to accept the risk and allow personal insurance policies? Your insurance broker can provide guidance on this important question.

**Shabbat and holidays.** Can an organization rent from you on Shabbat or Yom Tov? Can a synagogue have an event on Shabbat or hold High Holiday services, even though your school is closed on these days? How late can the renting youth basketball program stay on Friday nights? These questions bring up the issue of building hours and accessibility. Should you choose, you can have two separate groups of accessibility, one for rentals on Shabbat/Yom Tov and one for other days.

**Use permit.** Do you have one with your city or other governmental agency that allows (or doesn’t) rentals or certain types of events? Items that you may or may not have restrictions on can include specific hours you can be open, how many people can be on campus at certain times, how late activities can run, when amplified sound can be used outdoors, etc.
THE BUSINESS PROCESS

Here are crucial steps for managing the business of rentals.

**Application.** Renters need to provide basic information that includes the organization, information about them, and the time and space needs that are foreseen for the request. The application has great information to start a constructive conversation.

**Contract.** It is crucial to have a legally vetted contract for rental purposes including rules and regulations. Both organizations must sign this binding document. Best practices include a school attorney preparing this document or at minimum, reviewing someone else's document to be made unique for your school.

**Rates** for renting your premises should be thought through and represent your school and the quality of your campus. What are the qualities of your grounds? How often do you take care of your track? Recoeat your gym floor? Shampoo the classroom carpets? Do you have additional services to supplement athletic events or auditorium presentations? Do you cater? Most importantly, what charges are standard to the contract, and what is extra? The answers to these and similar questions provide backup to creating a fair rental fee. Your basic rental may include tables and chairs and, if needed, basic use of microphones. Consider using a specialist (lighting or sound technician) to assist you in developing fair rates for some of the specialized fees.

**Discounting.** If a group is renting for several dates or for many hours, consider finding a way to give them a discount, possibly 10%. You may wish to have discounted rates or for special groups such as other schools or “feeder organizations” (i.e., synagogues, JCCs). Consistency with discounting is important. When invoicing the renter, it is recommended to show the gross rental and anything discounted as separate line items. People feel great when they see they’ve gotten a discount.

**Bartering:** If appropriate, consider it. Your local Department of Parks and Recreation may wish to rent your gym and, in lieu of cash, give your school credit for rental of its premises (e.g., renting their soccer field as you don't have one). Win-wins are the best!

**Managing the process** requires the right person who is a part of your school's facilities and finance teams or works with them closely. A senior staff member should be on site during rentals, especially at the program's beginning and at large events, which could mean evenings and weekends. The right person can make all the difference.

**Security** is always crucial no matter who is on site, and even more so if it is not your “normal community.” If additional officers are needed due to the rental to make it a safer experience, what is your policy as to who pays? Some organizations may ask if they can bring their own security. Best practice is to not have two different security companies together on the same campus. You should decide if extra security is necessary, not the renter. You should not charge for services already on duty. If the rental necessitates more security or if the rental goes beyond your normal operating hours, then charge extra. The charge should be a flat rate that averages all different pay levels of security officers at regular and overtime wages.

**Maintenance** is a crucial component of making a rental happen and should be treated similar to security. An organization needs to pay for more maintenance if there are extra needs for setup, cleanup and support during the event, or if it goes beyond the normal operating hours. If it will be a large event that may involve food, additional maintenance will be required and should be paid for by the renter. The bottom line is that the school should not pay for anything beyond the basic needs of a rental.

**When to say no?** Some organizations will draw all of your time and energy into negotiating a contract. Don't decrease your rates, nor should you discount because the neighboring school charges less. Don't discount actual out-of-pocket expenses such as security, maintenance or other support personnel. There is a reason other locations charge less and you charge what you do. Coming to a final agreement is not a bargaining game. It is ok to say no to a rental. Be polite and professional, thank the organization and wish them the best.

**Lose money on a rental?** And what does “lose” really mean (out-of-pocket costs or minimal/no revenue)? If controlled and reviewed, you may wish to rent to an organization that has been or can be a great feeder. As an example, a rabbi has been sending many kids to your school, and her synagogue wants to use your facilities for an event. Consider the big picture to the school as a whole. Discuss the situation ahead of time with the proper personnel.

**You and the school are in charge.** Renters need to be respectful of your grounds, rooms and all personnel. Rental income is useless if you're paying for major damages, your school's personnel have been disrespected or the renter's guests won't act in a safe manner on your property. Sometimes even threatening closing of an event is necessary; make sure, in a respectful format, the renting group understands clearly they are guests.

**OTHER FACTORS**

Consider engaging your faculty as part of your informal network of rental agents. Let them know your policies regarding rentals. Make sure they know to send you any potential leads without promising times and rates. Additionally, you may choose to advertise using both "conventional" methods in addition to social media.

Depending on your geographical area, there may be unique opportunities for rentals. If there are professional sports teams in your area, you may be able to attract them to some of your athletic facilities, especially during off and pre-season practices. Many parts of the country have TV or movie filming that can be a great source of revenue if your taxing agency allows. When considering a movie or TV shoot, there are many fine points to address such as size of crews, extra noise, times, potential disturbance to school operations and/or neighbors. What will you do for those who “can’t pay/don’t have a location budget”? Film students may call you with this situation.

The best part of rentals is when you hear a new student say, "I wasn't considering your school until my basketball league used your gym. I told my mom I have to go to this school!”
Net Tuition Revenue Modeling: Harness the Capacity of Financial Aid for Financial Sustainability

Enrollment management is an essential tool for aligning mission, enrollment priorities and student composition. However, student numbers, even student body demographics, are just one part of the equation. Student enrollment generates up to 80% of the revenue in many schools—money that goes to paying salaries and benefits, supporting programming and maintaining facilities. One way to manage this important financial lever is to set goals for net tuition revenue.

Many admission offices focus solely on enrolling a targeted number of students, utilizing a fixed financial aid budget. A focus on net tuition revenue requires a significant mindset shift: Financial aid becomes a tool to generate revenue for the school and is no longer considered an expense. Yes, financial aid students do generate revenue. If your school has empty seats, and particularly if you have students in a financial aid wait pool, this mindset shift is critical to your school’s financial sustainability. However, it takes a strong, well-informed leader to guide a skeptical board of trustees or business office to an understanding of how the strategic use of financial aid and scholarships can set a school on a path to enrollment growth and financial sustainability. Armed with the proper data and information, you can guide your school to see revenue from financial aid and scholarships as revenue gained and not income lost.

Simply put, net tuition revenue is full tuition billed minus financial aid awarded. Instead of beginning the recruitment and enrollment season with a set financial aid budget, the school sets a net tuition revenue goal. Keeping in mind the number of seats you have to fill, you can utilize financial aid to work toward your set tuition revenue goal. You don’t stop when you’ve awarded a fixed amount of aid. You stop when you’ve filled your seats and met or hopefully even exceeded your net tuition goal.

Establish how much average tuition per student you need to arrive at your net tuition goal, and track your progress.
regularly. This will give your financial aid committee the discipline to keep aid awards in sustainable ranges. In my office, we do these calculations weekly, looking at tuition revenue generated from full pay, aided and tuition remission students separately. It is important to have a clear picture of how many families are “full pay” and paying all of tuition, “aided” and paying some of tuition, and “tuition remission” and receive a tuition grant as an employee discount. You may also wish to consider tracking “high pay” families as a separate subset of “full pay” so they do not skew your data. We define “high pay” as families who pay 90-100% of tuition. We also look at net tuition per grade and by day, boarding and international student populations. For us, it is important to maintain balance by grade level and within our day, boarding and international boarding populations. Weekly monitoring of each of these groups allows us to make changes where needed, watching for groups that may become too heavily populated with families receiving financial aid.

Some may be alarmed by this prospect. What happened to traditional need-based financial aid administration? Are we walking away from SSS, FAST and FACTS? Absolutely not. The net tuition revenue model is not a financial aid policy. In order to successfully employ this strategy, you must have solid guidelines and policies in place for the administration of need based financial aid and/or scholarships. But regardless of what tool(s) you utilize to determine need-based aid for families, it’s important to be able to utilize professional discretion when considering what percentage of stated need you can meet for each family. It’s equally important to see the revenue generated from financial aid families as just that, revenue.

How do you convince your school leaders to adopt a net tuition revenue model? Let’s start with some sobering numbers. According to the Enrollment Management Association (EMA), more than 50% of families with incomes over $200,000 express concern about affordability when considering independent school for their child (The Ride to Independent Schools). The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) found that for a family making $150,000 a year, the mean average day tuition represented 16% of that family’s household income. For families making $75,000 a year, it doubled to 33%. Due to increased demand, NAIS member schools are also giving aid to more families. In 2010, NAIS member schools were giving financial aid to about 30% of families with incomes in excess of $150,000. Five years later that number has increased to 43% (NAIS Trends Book, 2015-2016). The bottom line is, most families can’t afford our schools without help. Equally concerning, many of the families who can afford to pay a healthy percentage but not all of our tuition often don’t see themselves as candidates for financial aid. These are sobering statistics for enrollment managers. Lead with this when talking with your board or business office.

Data is key. Gather three to five years of enrollment and tuition revenue data. Look at your enrollment history and consider enrollment trends you see. Be sure you understand the true capacity of your school without increasing fixed costs, and establish the marginal cost of educating one additional student at your school. (You can work with your academic and business offices to get these numbers.) These data points will give you enrollment caps for your school and, ideally, each grade level. If it turns out that you have seats to fill, this model may work for your school. Knowing the cost of educating a student gives you a number you should not go below except in exceptional cases.

Consider breaking down net revenue by grade. This should show you where your highest and lowest revenue groups are. You should be concerned if you are about to graduate a high revenue group and don’t have students behind them to replace the enrollment numbers and revenue. Also, review your family incomes vs. tuition paid and aid awarded. The patterns should help you make general assertions about typical aid awards for certain incomes and family sizes. This is helpful to compare to award recommendations issued by the traditional tools like SSS, FAST and FACTS.

Impute enrollment numbers and tuition revenue to represent families you could have enrolled had you offered them financial aid. You’ll have to do some guessing here. This data should not only help you make informed decisions about how you utilize financial aid and scholarships, but also to see the potential impact of taking families out of the financial aid wait pool or offering aid to families who decline enrollment due to price. Chances are, your business office will see value in aiding qualifying families to fill empty seats.

Finally, be prepared to answer “why” beyond generating additional revenue. Are you simply trying to fill empty seats? Maybe your goal is to access a new market. Does your school wish to achieve greater socio-economic balance? Is there an opportunity to offer a partnership scholarship with a local like-minded institution? For example, schools sometimes find it beneficial to offer scholarships to employees of local universities or families attending a specific feeder school. These “partnership” scholarships help solidify ties between your school and an institution you wish to align with. Standing on the platform of an important initiative or institutional goal will give you additional leverage when trying to convince your colleagues of the merits of a net tuition revenue model.

Should you adopt the net tuition revenue model, the most critical step is to maintain your data. Be sure to generate weekly reports of net tuition revenue for enrolled students. It is also critical to project ahead to see how financial aid commitments impact the school’s commitment to individual families as well as the school community as a whole. Set annual net tuition revenue goals with the aid of admission office that understands enrollment trends, past year’s net tuition revenue data, and the business office who focuses on budgetary needs.

Net tuition revenue modeling can be utilized to generate revenue and fill empty seats for your school. It gives the admission and financial aid offices greater flexibility and professional discretion in managing enrollment. It can also assist schools in creating socioeconomic diversity and targeting new markets. Whatever your goals are, a net tuition revenue model is simple when revenue from financial aid families is viewed as income and not an expense to the school. Changing your institution’s mindset in this way can support enrollment goals and set your school on the path to long-term financial sustainability.
As Shawn Achor, Harvard University happiness researcher and author of *Big Potential*, pointed out, “When George Lucas wrote the script to the billion dollar Star Wars franchise, the most iconic line in movie history—‘May the Force be with you’—was not in it. Instead, the earliest versions read, ‘May the Force of Others be with you.’” George Lucas spoke of something powerful in that original version, but it was something that was overruled by the society that “has become overly focused on the ‘power of alone’ versus ‘the power of one made stronger by others.’” The book of Ecclesiastes, which we just read on Sukkot, reminds us that אוחז המשולש לא ינתק—A threefold cord is not readily broken. The strength of each individual cord becomes amplified in its intertwined grasp.

Whether you’re drawn to the insight of Ecclesiastes or the wisdom of George Lucas, the message is a similar one. Here at Prizmah, helping you to make the connections that will make you stronger is at the center of our work. We are committed to helping you deepen your connections with colleagues, forge new collaborations with peers, and crosspollinate ideas with educators from around North America.

The Prizmah Network has been built to provide space for self-organizing groups, action-oriented collaborations, peer-to-peer conversations and more. While some of our efforts aim to create fieldwide connections, others invest in the interests of particular groups. In this, our third year of the Prizmah, we are deepening our knowledge of schools and their unique regional trends so that we can foster meaningful connections between members of the field and the resources they need to thrive.

To that end, the Prizmah team is working in partnership with a range of organizations and leaders in order to support schools on the individual, whole school, communal-regional and fieldwide levels.

Prizmah’s peer-to-peer professional development Reshet groups host vibrant conversations and crucial sharing of perspectives and policies.

Personal relationships between school stakeholders and Prizmah team members ensure that we know how to best support your work.

In addition to supporting leaders through customized school-by-school commitments, Prizmah is moving the day school conversation forward at the community level. In coordination with Jewish Federations of North America and local Jewish organizations, Prizmah is designing community-wide approaches to school leadership collaborations, teacher pipelines, alternative tuition models, endowment building and professional development.

The JDS Collaborative forges partnerships among school leaders interested in addressing similar challenges through action-oriented facilitated cohorts.

Prizmah convenings will connect stakeholders from schools in small communities, development professionals, board members, yeshiva day school professionals and day school leaders across the field at the biennial Prizmah Conference.

The creation of a Knowledge Center will provide access to a comprehensive repository of reports, videos, articles and other useful material related to Jewish day schools.

Prizmah’s research agenda looks to identify critical trends in professional and lay leadership that can enable us to provide strategic support and guidance for strengthening day schools.

At the heart of our work are the relationships that we have with each and every one of you. With the new Jewish year upon us, I’d like to ensure that we at Prizmah are helping to make the connections that will make you stronger. And, as they say in the old country, May the Force of Others be with you.
What the Jewish Organizational World Can Learn from the Sharing Economy

In case you haven’t noticed, the Age of the Sharing Economy is upon us. One industry after another has been unceremoniously upended by hungry startups using innovative solutions to challenge the status quo and swallow up market share in the process. The taxi industry was brought to its heels by Uber and Lyft; the hospitality industry is contending with AirBnB. And hundreds, even thousands, of other companies are designing apps and interfaces that cut out the middlemen and offer value direct-to-consumer. My personal favorite: those Bird scooters!
There is a principle that serves as a common denominator to all of these sharing economy startups: How can we get the most value out of the resources we have at our disposal? For example, when you own a car, even if you drive a lot, that car will sit idle most of the time. Uber allows car owners to squeeze more value out of that asset (the car) when they aren’t using it. AirBnB allows for an apartment that would otherwise be collecting dust to generate revenue for its owner.

In the course of my own career, my calling card has been to stand at the nexus of business and education. As often as possible, I ask the question: How can we approach the problems of education with the tenacity and innovation of the Fortune 500 behemoths? Why does what we do deserve any less than that? That’s why I got an MBA; it’s why I obsessively devour *Harvard Business Review* articles and *The New York Times* business bestsellers. I’m always looking for an approach from the corporate world that can add real value in my own field.

Such an opportunity nearly fell into my lap three years ago. Shalhevet High School, the Orthodox Jewish high school in Los Angeles where I currently serve as head of school, was temporarily relocated to the nearby Westside JCC as our new campus was under construction. The JCC had another tenant at the time: Ikar, a post-denominational Jewish congregation and community in Los Angeles, founded and led by Rabbi Sharon Brous. Not exactly a perfect shidduch.

From a practical standpoint, this was a perfect arrangement for the JCC. Shalhevet classes are in session from Monday through Friday. Ikar hosts its services on the Sabbath and the holidays. With both of us as tenants, the Westside JCC space that we shared would be occupied and utilized nearly 100% of the time. Over the course of the year of co-tenancy, Shalhevet and Ikar did not have much to do with each other, but eventually conversations began. Rabbi Sharon Brous, the dynamic spiritual leader of Ikar, and I began meeting for coffee, hearing a bit more about each other’s organization. As the sharing arrangement seemed to work well, perhaps we might be able to continue our association even after we left the Westside JCC.

As the finishing touches were being put on our new building, Rabbi Brous and I broached the idea—first between us, and then to our respective boards—of bringing on Ikar as a tenant on our new campus. The benefit of this arrangement was fairly obvious and drew upon the principles of the sharing economy discussed above. Shalhevet High School’s magnificent building was only going to be occupied five days of the week, and not on various holidays or breaks. Ikar would use the building on Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. The increased tenancy would lead to other auxiliary benefits. For instance, we could now offer our custodians and security guards gigs on the weekends. While there were technical challenges, such as more wear and tear on the building, a cost-benefit analysis clearly pointed to this being an ideal arrangement.

Ideologically, however, the arrangement presented more serious challenges, enough for both me and my board to take...
pause and consider whether to proceed. Shalhevet is a traditional, modern Orthodox Jewish day school. Ikar is a non-denominational spiritual congregation. Generally speaking, our goals are one and the same: educating and inspiring Jews towards spiritual connection and communal belonging. But when descending to the particulars of various issues, there are many ways in which our approaches diverge considerably. Example: the State of Israel. Both organizations are proudly Zionist and supporters of the State of Israel. But we go about that support in quite different ways. Shalhevet leans more towards the center-right of the political spectrum; Ikar leans more progressive.

While I cannot speak to Rabbi Brous’s process for evaluating the challenges posed by this arrangement, as an Orthodox day school, our first move was to consult with a halachic authority. After numerous discussions with roshyeshiva at Yeshiva University, they were excited at the idea of using the space together but with several preconditions that they described as non-negotiable in order to maintain a dividing line between the organizations. For instance, Ikar could not advertise its name on the outside of our building. Another example: Ikar could host a minyan in our auditorium, but not in our beit midrash.

Above and beyond the fairly black-and-white parameters established by our poskim (halachic authorities), there were issues that arose within a gray area that required our cooperation, conversation and creativity. Example: Ikar is committed to having gender-neutral bathrooms available for its community members and guests. While we at Shalhevet pride ourselves on our sensitivity to sexual orientation and gender, we choose to create policy that is more subtle and nuanced given the broad cross-section of families at the school. We would not, for example, put up public signage indicating non-gendered bathrooms. But for Ikar, it was important to make the space consistent with their own values and in a public manner. What to do? The solution: On Shabbatot, we allowed Ikar to place signs indicating a private, single-stall, all-gender bathroom, provided they remove them before Monday when school starts.

It should be noted that certain issues that we simply assumed would be issues turned out not to be issues at all. This was a valuable (and humbling) learning experience for me personally. For instance, we assumed that kashrut would present a challenge, that they adhered to different or more lenient standards than our own. As it turns out, Ikar keeps full kosher to the same standard as our own school. (The fact that they serve only vegetarian food made the process even easier.)

So, in the final analysis, Shalhevet and Ikar found ways to work through challenges and engage in a productive and mutually beneficial co-tenancy relationship that provided an innovative, cost-effective solution. But if the only reasons for proceeding with this partnership were economic, I’m not sure that the effort would have been worth it. There was something more important at stake.

Unfortunately, we don’t just live in the Age of the Sharing Economy. We also live in an age of discord and division. We live in a fractured world in general, and a fractured Jewish world in particular. On an individual, organizational, communal and denominational level, we are often at each other’s throats. Even when we are ostensibly getting along, we often talk about cooperation and achdut (unity), but rarely do we find opportunities to put that togetherness into action in a substantive way.

But that’s what we were able to do here. Was it great that we could squeeze more value out of our building? For sure. Was it important to demonstrate the sort of innovative and economical solution that could alleviate some of the challenges presented by the “tuition crisis”? Definitely. But I think what was even more important was modeling for our students what cooperation means—that you don’t need to see eye to eye on every issue in order to work together and to share a sacred space with one another.

Ikar’s tenancy at Shalhevet has an expiration date. They have just launched a capital campaign to raise money for a new building of their own. They are a wonderful, dynamic and fast-growing community, and even though we at Shalhevet will miss having them as co-tenants, we are also happy for them as they take this next step. The connection that we forged together, however, is one that will last a long time, long after they’ve left the premises. And if there’s one way I know that for sure, it’s this: Rabbi Brous has enrolled her daughter as an incoming freshman at Shalhevet High School.
Google and other Silicon Valley giants have become well known for creating workplaces that increase the chances of personal interactions, with the intended outcome of increased innovation and creativity—and recent research has begun to support this approach. A 2014 issue of the Harvard Business Review reported that “creating collisions—chance encounters and unplanned interactions between knowledge workers, both inside and outside the organization—improves performance.” Creating opportunities for these kinds of creative interactions between staff at school, let alone between educational organizations, is a challenging task; the often-siloed work of teachers in classrooms, and schools as stand-alone institutions, makes this even more of a challenge for those of us who work within the confines of a school building. And yet the benefits of interaction are exactly what we found when our two schools entered into a new and exciting partnership by sharing space.
The relationship was born out of convenience. For 30-plus years, Netivot HaTorah, a Modern Orthodox day school in Toronto, lived next door to a Reform day school. Due to low enrollment, the latter sold its building and moved north, while Netivot, due to an increase in student population, needed more space. At the same time, Zareinu, a school for students with special needs, partnered with Camp Aim, a summer camp for the same student demographic. They purchased the Reform day school's building, renaming it Kayla's Children's Centre (KCC). Since they could not use the entire space and needed the rental income, Netivot rented part of the upper floor and gym.

Over the year we began to run joint programs, first around chaggim, then around a specific fifth grade project where Netivot students designed a Torah video game specifically for their KCC peers. These were beautiful moments, with each student bringing out the best in the other. We spoke about more such interactions, but the ideas were limited to short engagements and programs. Then these experiences began to move our thinking.

Several years prior, Toronto had a stand-alone Jewish day school for special needs education called She'arim, which folded. This left a void in the day school system for students whose needs were beyond the scope of the traditional day school's dual curricular program. Other schools tried to compensate by expanding their special education programs, including Netivot, and while their impact was positive, the scope was understandably limited.

KCC began running satellite classes at other day schools to support some of these students. They were partially integrated, and these students came to the KCC campus for therapies one day a week. The satellite classes were a great solution for dozens of families who desperately wanted their children to remain in Jewish day schools while receiving support for their learning needs. Still, the model didn't work for all students, and KCC recognized the need some students had for closer proximity to the main campus where they could have ongoing access to clinical support and more flexible integration in their host school's educational program.

The lay and professional leadership of Netivot and KCC decided to explore a closer partnership. We looked at two Jewish day schools, in Florida and Washington, DC, where programs for special education were integrated into a host school. The result in each was a much deeper level of program integration for students, with seamless transitions between host and special-needs classes, and a dramatically increased level of programmatic offerings for students in the special education program. The host school benefited from the deeper level of knowledge and understanding the special education program and its professionals had, as well as opportunities to keep students within its walls who would otherwise have had to leave due to high academic demands of their program. Having Netivot and KCC next door to one another created the potential for just such a program. As it happened, KCC was looking to create a new satellite program for students in Grades 1-3, and intended to approach Netivot as a potential host. With the US model in mind, our close physical proximity, we looked to create a more organic and seamless educational experience for the upcoming school year.

This year, Netivot and KCC are offering two partnerships as a way to leverage our close physical proximity and close the gap for students who want to remain part of Jewish day school while requiring greater learning and/or behavioral support. Students in a single grade 1-3 class will be given the opportunity to integrate into academic classes, appropriately matched to their individual learning plan and level of independence, while still having access to all the therapies and supports that KCC offers. These students will have the opportunity to participate in the broad range of Jewish and communal experiences at Netivot. Our partnership has already allowed us to support two existing Netivot students who previously struggled to meet the standard dual-program goals; they will be in Netivot for half a day and at KCC for the other half.

We have also decided to extend the partnership to grades 4-6 for students who have greater needs, like global developmental delays or Down Syndrome, who are unable to integrate into academic classes. These students will benefit from KCC’s academic setting and will now have the opportunity to integrate with Netivot students through non-academic activities, where and when possible. This model allows for the removal of boundaries and offers students the academic and social experiences according to their needs, irrespective of the physical environment of their school.

Our experience has shown that the sharing of space can bear tremendous fruits for the good of our communities. Just like at Google, the interactions that result by way of physical proximity reveal opportunities and relationships that would have not existed otherwise. Necessity, and physical proximity as well, have been for us the mothers of invention.
With a theme as big as "Dare to Dream," all of us at Prizmah are kicking off the new year with some major dreaming of our own for the 2019 conference!

Preferred pricing will be available to schools that are part of the Prizmah Network. Not yet part of the Prizmah Network for this year? Contact Robin Feldman at network@prizmah.org to join and take advantage of this benefit and many more.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to catch the latest conference updates, and to see what our staff is up to as we visit more schools than ever before in the new year.

#PRIZMAH2019  PRIZMAH.ORG/PRIZMAHCONFERENCE
Imagine a world where Jewish educators had access to a plethora of well-thought-out, polished classroom resources that were inspiring, thoughtful, tried and tested, available through an organized and searchable database and easily editable to make each resource relevant to the content and context of a particular learning environment. Imagine how much stress, time and effort would be saved, allowing teachers to focus on content adaptation and delivery rather than searching, organizing, researching and developing materials from scratch.

One would think that such collections or databases already exist in the Jewish day school world. After all, plenty of teachers have great units on Rashi, or Eilu metziot (from the Talmud), that others could learn from, whether it's an engaging enduring understanding, a thoughtful discussion question, a novel set induction, a creative assessment technique, a well-designed worksheet or a clearly formulated scope and sequence. We have the experience, resources and technology to pool these incredible resources into an online collaboration for Jewish education, but a variety of factors hinder its implementation.

This article explores some of the general issues faced when cultivating such collections, with specific examples from my work on the Pardes Online Tefilah Resource Database. It concludes with some practical steps forward.

**IMPEDEMENTS TO COLLABORATION**

There are many challenges when it comes to collecting and sharing resources, and it may be useful to separate the various perspectives to explore each one more fully.

**Schools**

Many schools have clauses and stipulations in educator contracts that they own the work of the teachers. Some educators negotiate with employers to obtain a clause stipulating that ownership of creative work belongs to them, but there is still an inherent feeling that sharing is wrong and more generally discourages a sense of collaboration. Some educators negotiate with employers to obtain a clause stipulating that ownership of creative work belongs to them.

According to the National Education Association’s Office of General Counsel, “If your employment contract assigns copyright ownership of materials produced for the classroom to the teacher, then you probably have a green light [to share/sell materials]. Absent any written agreement, however, the Copyright Act of 1976 stipulates that materials created by teachers in the scope of their employment are deemed ‘works for hire’ and therefore the school owns them.” The US legal system sets up an inherent conflict in teachers sharing material.

Aside from the law, why are some schools and organizations adding the clause that they own the work of their teachers?

**Fame and money.** A school may want to distribute or sell the curricula at some future time; they don’t want to risk losing attribution or potential income.

**Legal minds.** The business office is run by business people who are not clued into wider Jewish communal needs.

**History.** Often, contracts were negotiated years prior, and school leaders don’t want to pay legal fees to make the changes.

**Competition.** A particular curriculum may help the school stand out. There is a fear that sharing would remove that competitive edge.

**Individuals**

The Jewish community is blessed with many gifted and talented educators who create wonderful programs. What is preventing individuals from inspiring other teachers and impacting even more students?

**Time.** When not teaching, educators may have other jobs, family or personal needs to attend to. Spare time to foster shared learning is a luxury that many Jewish professionals do not have.
Image. An educator does not want to share material that might reflect poorly on themselves. The decision becomes whether to invest time to make it professional or not send it in at all.

Incentive. Some educators get paid to create material, write articles, etc., so why would they give their best material away for free?

Fear of being judged. Maybe people will love the resource—but what if they don’t, and what if people criticize it? Educators may feel they have nothing new to add, or their material is not good enough.

Self-curation. Some experienced educators are trying to separate themselves from the crowd and create a name for themselves. Sharing material freely may run counter to the unique value proposition they are trying to promote. If everyone else has their material/ideas, then they become less unique.

Cross-Communal Organizations
There are Facebook groups, listservs and websites that share information, links to other websites and occasional resources. There are drop-in education centers where teachers can browse diverse educational materials. However, there are still no platforms for teachers to easily share and access materials. The following are some of the reasons:

Budget. A lot goes into creating a functional database. Design, creation and maintenance are required; resources need to be formatted, tagged and uploaded.

Contributions. Even with an infrastructure, a database without a critical mass of resources will not be useful. What campaigns, incentives or shifting of values will get educators to share?

Risk. We all know of projects in the Jewish world that are started one year and disappear the next. Who would fund something so risky? Why would educators invest their time and effort producing resources that few people, for a limited amount of time, might use?

Ownership. By definition, communal resource sharing is not owned by any one entity, so no one is making it a priority. For most teachers, it’s a no-brainer for such a mechanism to exist, and it would make their lives easier, but to whom do they suggest this and who will take up their cause?

Priorities. Other causes are considered more pressing, like fundraising, student recruitment and retention, and innovation.

Some organizations and movements have focused on more in-depth curriculum programs and professional development aimed at individual schools. Examples such as the Legacy Heritage Bible and Rabbinic Standards and Benchmarks project and the Melton Curriculum are addressing school needs through thoughtfully designed curriculum with scope and sequence. One could argue that these are better vehicles for addressing teacher needs rather than a collection of teacher submitted resources.

The Kohelet Prize Database is a bold attempt at incentivizing the process to get teachers to share their best ideas (which Jewish day school teacher would not benefit from $36,000?). Yet the motive to win the prize discourages teachers sharing material that is useful but not prizeworthy. The database may be good at collecting the best innovations in Jewish education, but it is not a model for genuine collaboration and sharing.

Torah Umesorah’s online resource database Chinuch.org is a rich repository of 8,700-plus resources, more than 1.4 million downloads and approximately 40,000 registered users. Teachers willingly give materials. The obstacles listed above either don’t exist for them, or the value of sharing for the betterment of Jewish education overrides such impediments. While this may be an effective resource for the Torah Umesorah community, this resource does not meet the needs of other day schools.

HOWEVER, IT CAN WORK
I was fortunate to work on the creation of the Pardes Online Tefilah Resource Database (tefilah.pardes.org), funded by AVI CHAI. Often tefillah educators have difficulty finding good resources, especially in non-praying minyanim, and this free database is part our approach to improve the quality of instruction in this field. The database contains resources donated by tefillah educators, easily searchable by grade, prayer, etc.

Some of the issues above factored into our own efforts in resource collection, with about 7% of educators contacted actually contributing. We had a much higher rate of respondents saying they were interested in such a resource but did not have anything to contribute, which may be due to the difficult nature of tefilah education.

Different educators have different types of approaches to sharing:

- Newer teachers, veteran educators nearing the end of their professional careers, and educators who created curriculum as part of a program (MA, or research project) were happy to share whatever they had.
- Jewish professionals who were not teachers were willing to share their materials.

Experienced educators still working in the field shared a few resources but were reluctant to share more. These educators were affected by the issues of time, image, incentive, fear of being judged and self-curation listed above. Time and incentive appear to be the biggest obstacles.

We went into this project with our eyes open, knowing that any resource collection process will be long and time-consuming. Once the database launches and teachers see its practical use, we will see if teachers more readily overcome inhibitions to sharing their work.

FOR THE FUTURE
We have to consider our options for resource sharing models for all Jewish content (Bible, Rabbinics, Jewish Thought, History, Ethics, etc). If there is not currently enough of an incentive for educators to share, we could design a rewards system (money, recognition, PD funds). There are successful for-profit resource sharing websites that allow teachers to earn extra income; teacherspayteachers.com, for example, is a database of 3 million resources, which 5 million teachers used last year, with more than 1 billion downloads.

To move forward in the implementation of a collaborative platform, a funder needs to see the value of the missed opportunity and take ownership of it. Serious research and discussions about the modes of sharing, motivations of contributors and needs of educators, has to take place.

To further encourage collaboration, organizations need to come together and change our culture into one of sharing. If we want teachers to share their material, school leaders have to adopt a mindset of collaboration. Heads of schools, directors and department chairs need to encourage and create forums for their faculty to share with their peers in other schools in the area. Perhaps we can form a network of “sharing“ schools that allocate some time for their teachers to format and package their curricula materials to be shared among others in the network.

There is much potential and tremendous benefit when good people are willing to share and collaborate. Teachers could benefit in so many ways from a pool of resources to help them in the hard work they do. We invite your faculty to seize the opportunity.
MEET PRIZMAH’S NEW STAFF

CHERYL WEINER ROSENBERG
Senior Director of Marketing and Communications
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Cheryl is a marketing and communications professional with a strong background in the field of Jewish nonprofits. She has spent the last 10 years immersed in the Jewish day school arena as a parent and a lay leader. Cheryl lives in Englewood, New Jersey, where she serves as a city councilwoman representing Ward 1. She has four children who attend Ben Porat Yosef, where she served as the president of the board of trustees from 2014 until 2017. Cheryl completed the Berrie Fellows Leadership Program. She is an executive committee member of Teach NJ’s and on the leadership council of the Jewish New Teacher Project. Cheryl has a degree in communications and commerce from the University of Pennsylvania.

JENNY WECHTER
Administrative Assistant for Leadership and Development
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Jenny is Prizmah’s administrative assistant for the Leadership Academy and development team. Jenny graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 2017 with a bachelor of science in psychology and a bachelor of arts in Plan II, an interdisciplinary honors degree focused on critical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills. Jenny has work experience as a mindfulness consultant for the El Paso Independent School District, in which she evaluated an ongoing districtwide stress-reduction initiative and submitted a proposal for the continued integration of yoga and meditation practices into school curricula. Jenny also has experience in nonprofit development and project management, and is thrilled to be a part of the Prizmah team.

DANIEL INFELD
Director of Conference and Convenings
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Most recently, Daniel was the executive director of Limmud NY. Daniel also worked at Hazon and URJ Eisner Camp, and he was a safari guide at Walt Disney World’s Animal Kingdom. Daniel has a master’s degree in education and Jewish studies from New York University, and he is a graduate of Clark University. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Rachel, and sons, Asher and Micah.

AMY ADLER
Associate Director of Recruitment and Retention and Lead Coach of Atidenu
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Amy is an experienced professional in the areas of sales, marketing and branding as well as in the field of Jewish day schools. Amy supports day schools across North America with consulting and coaching in the areas of admissions, marketing, development and tuition assistance. After enrolling her eldest son in a Jewish day school, she was inspired by the mission and rich educational experience that day schools give children, leaving her corporate career to work in Jewish education. Amy spent eight years at The Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle, where she held positions as the director of admissions and tuition assistance and director of development. Amy has a bachelor of arts in communication and public relations. She and her husband Joshua live in Dallas, where all three of their children are enrolled in Jewish day school.

ESTHER MUSLUMOVA
Office Manager
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Esther has strong administrative and office management experience in Jewish organizations. She was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, moving to the United States at the age of 6. She speaks Russian and Spanish. Esther has a bachelor of arts in psychology and a master’s in public health from Hunter College. She worked at the Jewish Board as a clerk typist, an administrative assistant and an office manager. Esther is excited to use her organizational and data-based skillsets as she joins the Prizmah team.
When Leaders Coach


As school leaders, we often struggle to achieve the ambitious goals we set for the professionals we supervise and support, for ourselves, and ultimately, most significantly, for our students and for the overall quality of our schools. Key to our success is being intentional about the roles and tasks we take on as leaders.

Consider the following continuum. At one end, leaders function as judges, while at the other end, they function as captains or cheerleaders. At the potent midpoint, leaders function as coaches.

At the judge end, leaders can be compared to the silent judges in boxing and gymnastic matches, holding up a number that defines performance. There is no interaction, and no debate. The decision of the judge is final. When in the role of judge, leaders are assessing quality, focusing on high expectations and addressing concerns with performance. At the team captain/cheerleader end, leaders are affable and encouraging, demonstrating appreciation and celebrating accomplishment and effort. Both the judge, assessing quality, and the captain/cheerleader, demonstrating appreciation and celebrating accomplishment and effort, are vital leadership roles, foundational to the effective functioning of schools. However, to achieve substantial leaps forward in improving the quality of our schools, leaders will do well by functioning, as much as possible, in the role of coach.

School leaders who focus on coaching emphasize adult and student learning, directing resources of both time and finances to those areas that are most likely to impact the quality of their schools. They visit classrooms and offer nonjudgmental feedback to teachers, and they creatively allocate resources in order to provide high-quality instructional coaching to teachers. They emphasize collaboration, scheduling time for teachers to learn and plan together, and providing teachers training in working collaboratively with a focus on student learning. Never denying their responsibility to evaluate, they transform formal evaluative processes into opportunities for engaged professional reflection and learning. While holding high expectations, leaders who practice coaching are both supportive to their teachers and staff as professionals and concerned about their teachers and staff as individuals. The results can be transformative, unleashing potential in teachers and other professionals, and inspiring cultures of joyous curiosity and celebratory embrace of the possible for each professional and each student.

While immeasurably impactful, there are risks inherent in shifting to a coaching model of leadership when that has not previously been among the primary leadership modalities in a school. Teachers who have received exemplary or even satisfactory evaluations in a model closer to leader as judge may need to be convinced of the value of the high level of effort that must be invested in professional learning within a serious coaching model. Alternatively, teachers who have worked with leaders functioning more like an affable team captain or encouraging cheerleader may find new expectations, even offered with support, as a harsh imposition.

Regardless of the prior leadership model, some if not many teachers and staff members who have not experienced coaching will likely express skepticism about the benefits. They may also be concerned that coaching is being recommended due to lack of satisfaction with their performance, rather than as a gift all professionals deserve. Nonetheless, with careful pacing, explanation, encouragement and reassurance, school leaders can succeed in gaining buy-in for the transition to a coaching model. Through coaching, they can reach highly ambitious goals by supporting teachers and other professionals to engage in the sometimes disconcerting, yet ultimately invigorating, process of reflective, substantive professional learning, leading to potentially transformative school improvement.

To begin thinking about making the shift to spending more time in the role of coach, consider four steps.

- Be clear about what “hat” you are wearing.
- Get out of the office.
- Focus on teacher learning.
- Create a culture of coaching.
THE MOST TYPICAL RESERVATION TO THIS ARRANGEMENT RELATES TO THE
PROFOUND CHALLENGE OF BEING BOTH EVALUATOR AND COACH. HOW CAN ONE WITH THE ABILITY TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS ABOUT
ONE'S EMPLOYMENT BE A COACH, OFFERING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH? WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT SUPERVISORS CANNOT ALWAYS REMAIN IN A COACHING ROLE, AND THE EVALUATIVE ASPECT WILL BE A COMPONENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP, THERE CAN BE AN EMPHASIS ON COACHING, ESPECIALLY FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS YOU ARE CONFIDENT YOU WANT TO RETAIN. INTRODUCE TO TEACHERS HOW YOU ARE DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING YOUR ROLE AS A COACH. CONSIDER SHARING THAT, UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY SAY YOU HAVE A CONCERN AND ARE SPEAKING AS AN EVALUATOR, YOU WILL BE WEARING YOUR COACHING HAT. MAKE CLEAR THAT YOU WILL BE WORKING TO GIVE NONJUDGMENTAL, REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK TO TEACHERS AND DESIGNING WITH THEM OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR OWN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.

GET OUT OF YOUR OFFICE
COACHING REQUIRES BEING OUT AND ABOUT, IN CLASSROOMS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL. SHIFTING YOUR TIME TO SPEND MORE OF IT IN CLASSROOMS MAY BE EASIER SAID THAN DONE. THERE IS A GRAVITATIONAL PULL IN MANY SCHOOL CULTURES BECKONING LEADERS TO THEIR OFFICES IN ORDER TO BE ACCESSIBLE Whenever A TEACHER, CHILD OR PARENT NEEDS SOMETHING. MEETINGS, SOME VALUABLE, OTHERS EXPENDABLE, AND VOLUMINOUS AMOUNTS OF PAPERWORK CAN ALSO OVERTAKE. NONETHELESS, BEING A FREQUENT SUPPORTIVE PRESENCE IN CLASSROOMS IS ESSENTIAL TO A COACHING-BASED LEADERSHIP MODEL. AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IS TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CALENDAR, AND PLAN TIME TO BE IN CLASSROOMS. SOME SCHOOL LEADERS SCHEDULE TIME DAILY, FOR EXAMPLE, DEDICATING TWO HOURS PER DAY TO BE IN CLASSROOMS. OTHER SCHOOL LEADERS SCHEDULE LARGER CHUNKS OF TIME WEEKLY, YET NOT EVERY DAY, DEDICATING SOME DAYS PRIMARILY TO CLASSROOM TIME AND OTHER DAYS PRIMARILY TO OFFICE/MEETING TIME. THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU WILL SPEND IN EACH PARTICULAR CLASSROOM CAN VARY BASED ON WHAT IS OCCURRING IN THAT CLASSROOM AS YOU OBSERVE. YOU MIGHT SPEND AS LITTLE AS FIVE MINUTES, GAINING A GOOD SENSE OF LEARNING, OR AS MUCH AS AN ENTIRE 45-MINUTE OR ONE-HOUR LESSON.

WHEN BEGINNING TO VISIT CLASSROOMS, KNOW THAT NO MATTER HOW SUPPORTIVE YOU SEEK TO BE, YOUR PRESENCE WILL LIKELY CAUSE ANXIETY. BE SENSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL. SHARE A COMPLIMENT, EITHER VERBALE OR IN WRITING. THEN CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-REFLECTION. THIS MIGHT BE THROUGH BRIEF FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATIONS, WRITTEN THOUGHTS FOR TEACHERS TO CONSIDER, FORMALLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS TO ENGAGE IN REFLECTION, OR SOME COMBINATION. THE GOAL IS FOR TEACHERS TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN PRACTICE, AND TO CONSIDER WAYS THEY MIGHT SHIFT OR MODIFY LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO EVEN MORE EFFECTIVELY MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.

FOCUS ON TEACHER LEARNING
SCHOOL LEADERS FOCUSED ON COACHING ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS TO LEARN AND IMPROVE. AMONG THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORTS FOR THE IMPACT OF THIS WORK CAN BE FOUND IN THE RESEARCH OF JOHN HATTIE (VISIBLE LEARNING FOR TEACHERS: MAXIMIZING IMPACT ON LEARNING), WHOSE INVESTIGATION OF MORE THAN 900 META-ANALYSES REPRESENTS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH INTO WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS IN SCHOOLS. HATTIE FINDS “LEARNING LEADERSHIP” TO BE AMONG THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN IMPROVING SCHOOL QUALITY. SPECIFIC ACTIONS OF LEARNING LEADERS, OR PRINCIPAL COACHES, INCLUDE PROVIDING TEACHERS COACHING OVER AN EXTENDED TIME, IMPLEMENTING DATA TEAMS IN WHICH TEACHERS COLLABORATIVELY ANALYZE STUDENT WORK, FOCUSING ON HOW STUDENTS LEARN SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT, AND ENABLING TEACHERS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO PLAN AND MONITOR LESSONS BASED ON EVIDENCE ABOUT HOW STUDENTS LEARN.

CREATE A CULTURE OF COACHING
THERE ARE NUMEROUS WAYS OF EXTENDING THE COACHING MODEL BEYOND THE ROLE OF LEADERS TO THE ENTIRE SCHOOL. THIS CAN INCLUDE HIRING AN INSTRUCTIONAL COACH IF POSSIBLE. IT IS ALSO POTENTIALLY VALUABLE TO REPURPOSE EXISTING POSITIONS IN ORDER TO OFFER MORE COACHING TO TEACHERS. IS THERE A MASTER TEACHER WHO COULD HAVE TIME IN HER OR HIS SCHEDULE ALLOCATED FOR LANGUAGE ARTS OR MATH COACHING? IS THERE A SKILLED SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER WHO COULD OFFER COACHING IN DIFFERENTIATING LEARNING? CAN A TECHNOLOGY TEACHER SERVE AS AN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY COACH? AT TIMES, GRANTS MAY BE AVAILABLE TO BRING IN PART-TIME EXTERNAL COACHES.

ANOHER COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH TO A LEADERSHIP MODEL EMphasizing coaching includes creating time in teacher schedules for collaborative work, along with training in ways of utilizing that time effectively. HELPING TEACHERS TO LOOK AT STUDENT WORK, SET GOALS FOR STUDENTS TOGETHER, AND PLAN AND MONITOR LESSONS COLLABORATIVELY IS AN INVALUABLE COMPONENT OF CREATING A CULTURE OF SERIOUS, EFFECTIVE JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING. SOME SCHOOLS EXTEND ON THIS TIME WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS TO OBSERVE ONE ANOTHER’S TEACHING. DURING “LEARNING WALKS,” TEACHERS VISIT ONE ANOTHER’S CLASSROOMS AND REFLECT RESPECTFULLY ON WAYS THAT WHAT THEY HAVE OBSERVED COULD POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR OWN TEACHING. DURING “INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS,” TEACHERS VISIT EACH OTHER’S CLASSROOMS AND GIVE THE TEACHER OBSERVED SUPPORTIVE, REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK. IN “LESSON STUDY,” TEACHERS PLAN A LESSON TOGETHER. ONE TEACHER TEACHES THE LESSON, WHILE THE OTHERS OBSERVE. THE TEACHERS THEN DEBRIEF TOGETHER AND REFLECT ON THE LESSON. SOMETIMES THEY REVISE THE LESSON TOGETHER BASED ON REFLECTIONS, AND ANOTHER TEACHER TEACHES THE REVISED LESSON. THEY THEN BEGIN THE CYCLE AGAIN, PLANNING ANOTHER LESSON TOGETHER. WITHIN A PEER COACHING MODEL, TEACHERS OBSERVE ONE ANOTHER AND OFFER INSIGHT. EACH OF THESE APPROACHES ARE AIMED AT BREAKING DOWN TEACHER ISOLATION AND NURTURING A CULTURE OF REFLECTIVE COLLABORATION INTEGRAL TO A SERIOUS CULTURE OF COACHING.

NEXT STEPS
RETURNING TO THE OPENING LIST OF LEADERSHIP ROLES, THINK ABOUT THE WAYS THAT THE ROLES YOU HOLD MOST FREQUENTLY IMPACT THE LEARNING THAT TAKES PLACE IN YOUR SCHOOL. NOW, CONSIDER WHAT NEXT STEPS YOU MIGHT TAKE TO MOVE TOWARD A COACHING-BASED LEADERSHIP MODEL, INCREASING YOUR IMPACT IN IMPROVING QUALITY OF LEARNING, EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY AT YOUR SCHOOL.
Making Shared Classroom Space Successful

Most schools face limited resources. Physical space, specifically classroom space, is often at a premium. Where this challenge exists, teachers sharing space need to have thoughtful conversations about how to optimize its allocation. The cornerstone of making shared classroom space work is kavod, mutual respect, among the users of the classroom, as well as support from administrators.

Consider a situation where three teachers share the same classroom. A third-grade Judaic studies teacher uses the space in the morning. In the afternoon, a sixth grade teacher teaches history fifth and eighth periods and a third teacher has eighth-grade English during sixth and seventh periods. To make the sharing successful, the teachers need to meet well in advance to work out the logistics that will make the shared space appropriate for each grade and subject, proactively working out the details and putting systems in place to make the year run smoothly. Similar conversations also need to happen regularly during the school year so that issues that could cause resentment do not gain momentum.

The preemptive specifics should include how teachers and students will handle transitions, ways and incentives to be sure students take responsibility for their classroom, and teacher modeling of kavod. Pitfalls may occur if one of teachers had previously used the space for a long time and feels ownership of the classroom, or if the teacher who uses the space for the most instructional time justifiably wants more than a third of the space.

Teachers in shared classroom space should monitor whether their personal and pedagogical needs are being met by the environment each teacher encounters when entering and leaving the classroom. Open-ended questions such as “How is this working out for you?” can get a conversation rolling. It's the little things that can be annoying. Where is each teacher's personal space? How can teachers divide up the limited space for paperwork, lesson materials and personal laptops? Identifying specific work areas for each teacher and keeping those spaces reined in helps maintain organized space. Agreeing up front who gets which bookshelves and bulletin boards also helps. It is important to determine how common counter space is used and to determine which materials remain out, how long student displays stay on counters, and what is a reasonable way to keep long-term projects readily available. The school administration should be privy to these decisions in order to enforce them, if necessary.

In the same spirit, delineating specific tasks between transitions helps protect valuable class time. When younger students use the space, the teacher might opt for desks organized in pods of three or four desks pushed together. By contrast, the afternoon eighth grade English class may need the desks in a horseshoe or circle arrangement to generate more cross-conversations and less small group work. The fifth-grade history teacher might prefer rows for direct-delivery instruction and use of Smart boards or projected images. It's important during check-ins to determine who rearranges the desks between classes. Does the last class set it up for the next class, or does each class set up the space for itself? Who erases the board between classes? An elementary-level teacher might write out a daily schedule and a morning message, while the middle-school English teacher may need the board to write questions for editing or discussion. The teacher of history may write provocative questions that would not be appropriate for the younger students to read. These conflicts may seem trivial, but over time they can be irritating. Deciding upon the logistics ahead of time helps facilitate smoother transitions among the three different teachers and their three different instructional needs.

Successfully shared classrooms help students understand that everyone who uses the room has a responsibility to keep it organized, and to help ensure that the routines run smoothly. Making kavod explicit is both necessary and a valuable Judaic lesson. Everyone needs to feel ownership and pitch in to help. Jobs should be assigned and rotated: pencil sharpeners, desk movers, board erasers. Who puts the supplies away when class ends? Does each class have its own supply area, or is everyone sharing the same materials? If shared, who is in charge of replacing used materials, getting new ink cartridges for the printer, etc.? These are small details, but when students buy into the idea that it is expected that they do their part to maintain organized space and useable materials, it makes sharing classroom space successful.

Another consideration when sharing space among different grades and subjects is finding materials suitable for the age span. Younger students might have organizational baskets, funny posters and brightly colored rugs that scream “elementary classroom.” Teens may not appreciate being in a room full of “baby things.” It is important for all the teachers to use materials that are appropriate for all of the students sharing the room. This means posters of neither Kermit the Frog nor the Holocaust Museum are displayed. Instead, more neutral visual materials such as maps, charts and subject-specific tips are more appropriate.

Finally, each grade and subject needs space to celebrate its students’ work. Here, too, logistics need to be worked out. Some questions to consider include how long work should remain on bulletin boards, how often displays should be changed and how ongoing long-term projects should be stored.

There is no question that making shared classroom space work is challenging, but with solid administrative support, open and productive conversations and a lot of kavod, it can succeed.
**Love Warrior**
by Glennon Doyle

This is one of those books that, if it resonates with you, will leave its mark. On the surface it is about love and marriage and kids—things most of us can relate to; there are plenty of laughs and all-too-familiar tear-jerking moments along the story’s beautiful rollercoaster.

Beneath the surface, the book contains poignant messages about how we show up in the world, in our careers, in our relationships. It makes us think about how we manage the fine balance of truly knowing ourselves with deciding how much of our true self should be known to the world, and the rewards and consequences that come with these decisions. *Love Warrior* is about being a mother, a wife, a sibling, a daughter, a friend. But most importantly, it is about being, and knowing, oneself.

Cheryl Weiner Rosenberg

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**The Nix**
by Nathan Hill

This is the story of an English professor and unsuccessful writer who spends his free time escaping the pains and loneliness of his life in the fantasy world of a video game. With two boys at home currently obsessed with playing Xbox, I was intrigued that the main character, Samuel Andersen-Anderson, escaped reality through the game. Like many parents, I wonder about how much time on Xbox or any other gaming device is too much, and what long-term impact this will have on them.

Samuel’s dreary life is interrupted with the news that the mother who abandoned him as a child, and who he has not spoken too since then, has become an overnight media sensation by throwing rocks at a presidential candidate. Her attorney bids Samuel to come to her aid, which stirs many emotional triggers and unanswered questions. Over the course of the novel, Samuel goes on a search to understand how his mother ended up here, in Chicago and in the news. The story he uncovers weaves between Chicago in the 1960s and New York during the Great Recession, connecting pieces of his mother’s life and his own. The book’s many subplots all tie together to build a complex story of human resilience. The story caused me to reflect upon the history we may know or not know about our family. It led me to think differently about how as parents, our influence over our children, the behavior we model and decisions we make, shape who they become and how they live their lives.

Amy Adler

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**What School Could Be: Insights and Inspiration from Teachers Across America**
by Ted Dintersmith

What if you could visit every single Jewish day school in North America? Imagine how much you could learn, and what lessons you would glean from your tour. In a recent conversation with a head of school, we discussed what it is like to walk through the halls of another school. What you see on the walls is just as informative as what you see on the faces of the students and teachers. Having the opportunity to observe another school, not only hearing about its educational vision but seeing it in action, is something all school leaders should do as often as possible.

If you don’t have a sabbatical coming, then good news: Ted Dintersmith has done it for you. Spending a year visiting schools throughout the country, Dintersmith records his observations and offers incredible insights. His main message is that students thrive in environments where they develop PEAK: Purpose, Essentials, Agency and Knowledge. Each site visit includes a window into the educational vision of each school, and the firsthand experience of administrators, teachers, students and parents. The book is a tour through the good and the bad—and is packed with excellent ideas to try out in your own school.

Marc Wolf

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**All the Light We Cannot See**
by Anthony Doerr

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel slowly weaves together the lives of two young people on opposing sides during WW II: a blind French girl living with her widowed father in Paris, and a German boy who lives with his sister in an orphanage in the western part of Germany. Each struggles with their own unique set of challenges and circumstances during this most deadly of times. Once I fully entered their worlds, I was taken with both the author’s language and imagery, both descriptive (the sea, the sky, precise replicas of an entire town) and harsh (the ravages of war).

The wonder and power of radio communication plays a key role in the story and transported me to another time and place, a simpler one before our ubiquitous technological connectivity. It is through this sensory experience that the stories of these two people converge. Beautifully written and compelling, particularly the last 100 pages, this book will heighten all your senses and leave you with powerful messages to consider, as the theme of good versus evil is integrated with the realities of individual resolve, bravery, fate and moral ambiguity.

Francine Shron
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To learn more, please contact Jenny Wechter at jennyw@prizmah.org.

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