



Community Report:¹

Are Our Schools Places Where Teachers Thrive as Professionals? A Survey of Teachers in Bay Area Jewish Schools

December 2007

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¹ This project was funded by the Mandel Foundation and the Goldman Fund. The ideas expressed in the text are not those of the funding agencies. The authors take full responsibility.

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Executive Summary

*"The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers."
McKinsey Report, 2007*

We began this study from the well-documented premise that schools that provide good education to young people are places where there is a thriving professional environment for teachers. With this premise in mind, we designed this study to explore the quality of the teachers and the professional environment for teachers in Bay Area Jewish schools, with special attention to the extent to which teachers in these schools have rich opportunities to improve their teaching skills and their knowledge of their subject areas through professional development.

We surveyed 220 teachers who work in 14 different Bay Area Jewish schools. LOOK AT RESPONSE RATE Of these teachers, 61% teach in afternoon or congregational schools; 26% teach in day schools (one-third of whom teach Jewish studies), and 13% teach in preschools.

Several of our findings are worthy of the attention of those interested in improving Jewish education in the Bay Area:

- **Deep Commitment to Teaching:** Teachers in Bay Area MTEI articulate deep commitment to Jewish education and tend to stay in their positions for relatively long periods. On average, teachers stay in a given school 5 years or more, and over 82% plan to continue teaching in Jewish schools in the future. Over half the preschool teachers, virtually all the Jewish Studies day school teachers, and 40% of after school teachers describe themselves as having a career in Jewish education. This level of commitment is an incredible strength for our region, for it indicates that it would be possible to create an infrastructure that supports teachers to become better at their craft over time.
- **Enthusiasm for Collaboration and Growth:** Bay Area teachers rate the opportunity to work closely with other educators as highly important; they feel supported by school leadership; and they believe their school leaders and colleagues value innovation and experimentation in teaching. This appreciation for collaborative work and the confidence that their leaders and colleagues value innovation – like the commitment to teaching as a career – is a great source of potential strength for our schools, and indicates that there is enthusiasm among our teachers for on-going learning and growth.
- **Overall Weak Backgrounds in Jewish Content and Hebrew:** Despite the commitment to teaching and the enthusiasm for growth, teachers' educational backgrounds are not necessarily adequate for them to function optimally in their roles. Among all of the teachers we studied, only the Jewish Studies teachers in the day schools had strong preparation in both teaching and Jewish content. The majority of preschool teachers lacked any Jewish education of their own, either as children or adults. Congregational teachers,

while mostly holding college and advanced degrees, have limited advanced training in Jewish studies and are only moderately proficient in Hebrew. If we rely on our schools to be one of our key vehicles for transmitting Jewish thought and culture to the next generation – and we do – then it is essential to support teachers to develop more robust Jewish knowledge.

- **Opportunities for Professional Interaction and Professional Growth:** Among all the schools we surveyed, there is little time allocated for teachers to work together, talk together, or to observe one another's classes, particularly in afternoon school settings. Further, across the board, administrators rarely observe teachers teaching or give feedback regarding instruction. When teachers described the professional development in which they did participate, only a small proportion (20%) of these activities had the characteristics which research has shown to be necessary for effective professional development.
- **Potential Crisis in Preschool Teaching Recruitment.** Almost 25% of current preschool teachers are over age 60, and another 44% are between 40 and 60 years old. Along with this, preschool teachers indicate great dissatisfaction with their salaries, which are below the median of Bay area salaries. This dissatisfaction is well-grounded. These salaries are below salaries in the public sector and college campus settings. Given the large number of teachers who will be retiring soon – and the lack of pay as an incentive -- it's crucial that we attend to creating salaries and working conditions that will retain and attract qualified preschool teachers.

Our study demonstrates that there is very fertile ground in the Bay Area for creating a thriving professional environment for teachers, which in turn will create a vibrant learning environment for students. But we are far from achieving this vision. We urge the community to take concrete steps to develop the infrastructure in our schools so that teachers have the on-going resources to become more knowledgeable about their subject matter and to become ever more skillful teachers. We urge the community to take concrete steps to create a vision of a robust professional culture, to support school heads to become instructional leaders, define professional development as part of the job for both teachers and educational leaders, create professional development opportunities that enable all teachers to develop a deeper understanding of Jewish content and of how to teach Jewish content meaningfully to students of various ages, and allocate the resources to bring this vision alive. The study reviews our findings in more detail and provides specific recommendations for action.

SEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGES 14 AND 15.

Community Report

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McKinsey Report, 2007*

CONTEXT FOR THIS STUDY

Current educational research strongly supports the notion that schools that provide good education for young people are places where teachers are highly qualified and where there is a thriving professional environment for teachers. As researchers committed to serious Jewish education, we designed a study to explore whether Jewish schools in the Bay Area are those kind of places. We wanted to explore the quality of the teachers and the professional environment for teachers in Bay Area Jewish schools, with special attention to the extent to which teachers in our participating schools have opportunities to improve their teaching skills and their knowledge of their subject areas through professional development. Our study built upon previous surveys³ and sought to explore four questions:

1. What is the background and experience of the teachers in Bay Area Jewish schools?
2. What kind of professional culture is present in these schools?
3. What kinds of professional development (ongoing formal and informal learning opportunities) do these teachers encounter?
4. What working conditions and infrastructure that support and sustain professional relationships and student learning exist in these schools?

To pursue these questions, we administered, in the fall of 2006, a survey to the teachers in the 14 Bay Area Jewish schools⁴ who are participants in an innovative professional development program, Bay Area MTEI. (See Appendix A for the complete survey.) The program, sponsored by the Mandel Foundation, the Goldman Fund, and the Bureau of Jewish Education of the Bay Area, and launched

³ The survey was built on previous research and surveys in Jewish and general education, including: CIJE Study of Educators, January 1996, Principal Researchers Adam Gamoran and Ellen Goldring; Jewish School Study-Teacher Survey, 2000 by Barbara Schneider for the Cooperative Research Project in Chicago; M. McLaughlin and J. Talbert, 2001, *Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching*, University of Chicago Press; and the Longitudinal Teacher Survey, *Elementary School Mathematics*, Spring 1999 created by M. S. Garet, A.C. Porter, L. Desimone, B. F. Birman and K. S. Yoon of the American Institutes for Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Vanderbilt University. An earlier version of the survey was administered in the Boston MTEI project.

⁴ 10 after school programs (8 located in Reform congregations, 1 located in a Conservative congregation, 1 free standing community Jewish high school), 2 community day schools, and 2 early childhood programs located in JCCs.

in June, 2006, is designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Jewish schools in the greater Bay Area. The program works with school-based teams of educational leaders who are learning to design and implement intensive, sustained learning opportunities for teachers, with the aim of enhancing the professional climate for teachers and learning opportunities for students. Two hundred and twenty teacher-respondents -- a 72% response rate -- completed the survey: twenty-nine teachers were from early childhood settings; fifty-seven were from day schools (including eighteen who teach Jewish Studies); and 134 from afternoon school programs.

FINDINGS AND COMMENTARY

Several of our findings are worthy of the attention of those interested in improving Jewish education in the Bay Area:

Deep Commitment to Teaching: As Gamoran, et. al.,⁵ have pointed out, despite evidence to the contrary, conventional wisdom has portrayed teachers in Jewish schools as “accidental tourists,” a population that is transient and uncommitted. The teachers in schools participating in Bay Area MTEI are not, on the whole, short-term visitors to this profession. In fact, they tend to stay in their positions for relatively long periods and articulate deep commitment to Jewish education. Over half the preschool teachers, virtually all the Jewish Studies day school teachers, and 40% of after school teachers describe themselves as having a career in Jewish education, and over 82% plan to continue teaching in Jewish schools in the future.

Bay Area teachers have considerable experience; on average, teachers stay in a given school 5 years or more. (See Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix B.) The experience of preschool and day school Jewish Studies teachers does not differ substantially; both groups have taught in Jewish settings for about 11 1/2 years. The preschool teachers have taught in the Bay Area and in their same school for over 10 years while the day school teachers have taught over 8 years in the area and about 7 in the same school. Afternoon school teachers have approximately 9 years experience, with an average of 5 years in their current school.

⁵ See Gamoran, et.al., 1998.

Obviously, it is hard to effect systemic improvement in a system with a high rate of turnover. Hence, the relative stability in the teaching staff in the Bay Area and teachers' level of commitment to Jewish education is an incredible strength for our region. It indicates that it would be possible to create strategic plans and infrastructures that would likely have a significant impact on teaching and learning in our schools, as they supported teachers to become better at their craft over time. It stands to reason, too, that if our schools were to develop exciting professional development programs – so that a career in Jewish education would reward teachers with ongoing learning and growth – we would see even improved retention rates in our schools.

Enthusiasm for Collaboration and Growth: Teachers in every school indicated on average that “the principal is interested in innovations and new ideas” and that “teachers are encouraged to experiment with their teaching.” When asked whether they “were recognized for a job well done,” teachers in 13 out of 14 schools agreed with this statement overall.

We created a list of 14 benefits and asked teachers to indicate the importance of each. As we expected, in line with previous surveys of teachers,⁶ teachers in all settings ranked benefits involving direct compensation (salary) or indirect compensation (employer contributions to a health plan, and to some degree pension benefits) as very important. They also strongly valued job security. We were more surprised to find that teachers in every type of school reported that they value opportunities to work closely with other educators. Indeed, congregational teachers ranked collaborative work second only to direct compensation in importance. Day school and preschool teachers ranked it third. We assume, though we did not ask, that one of the attractive features of collaborating with colleagues is that it provides opportunities for learning, along with companionship, connection, and perhaps a greater sense of community. Our survey revealed the value teachers place on learning in an even more direct way, as 78% of the teachers indicated that funding for continuing education or to attend conferences is one of the most important benefits a school can provide. (See Table 3 in Appendix B.)

⁶ See Gamaron, et. al., 1998.

This appreciation for collaborative work and on-going learning – like the commitment to teaching as a career – is a great source of potential strength for our schools. These key building blocks have been shown to be critical in both launching and sustaining professional development programs that have a significant impact on teachers' ability as teachers. Unfortunately, as we shall explore below, this enthusiasm for on-going learning and growth in teaching skill rarely finds support in our schools through sustained professional development programs.

Overall Weak Backgrounds in Jewish Content, Hebrew, and in General

Education: Despite the commitment to teaching and the enthusiasm for growth, teachers' educational backgrounds are not necessarily adequate for them to function optimally in their roles. We investigated three separate areas of preparation for teaching in Jewish schools: 1) general education, 2) the study of education as a discipline, and 3) previous study in Judaism and Hebrew.

With regard to general education, we see the B.A. as a minimal threshold for teachers. While having graduated college does not ensure that one will be a skilled teacher, it does provide some assurance that the teacher has delved enough into some subject areas to understand what it is to learn deeply – a necessary, if insufficient, criterion for teaching. We argue, therefore, that it would be ideal for all of the teachers in our schools to have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

With regard to a specific background in learning to teach, considerable research has shown that teaching is not an innate talent. Teaching is primarily a skill that can be learned.⁷ Taking the time to study teaching and learning in a serious way helps one build skills and understand the work of teaching more deeply; ideally, the teachers in Jewish schools would be prepared in this way. For this reason, we inquired into our teachers' backgrounds in the discipline of education, seeking to learn how much training our teachers have in how to teach.

Finally, with regard to background in Judaism and Hebrew, common sense and educational research agree: you cannot teach what you don't know. We give our teachers the responsibility to convey the spirit and the substance of Judaism to our children. They cannot possibly be equipped to do this unless they themselves have

⁷ See Darling-Hammond, L. & McLaughlin, M. W. (1996), Darling Hammond, L. & Sykes, G. (1999). Feiman-Nemser, S. & Remillard, J. (1996).

considerable knowledge in Judaism. For example, answering in authentically Jewish ways the questions generated by children in a typical preschool class – “Why do we eat challah?” “It’s okay to hit someone if they hit you first, right?” or even, “How come God lets people die?” – requires a depth and subtlety of knowledge of Judaism; and no less so, of course, with older children.

The questions in our survey regarding general education and study of education were fairly straightforward: we asked how many years beyond high school people had studied, what academic degrees they had earned, what their majors had been, and the like. To inquire into Jewish background, we asked participants in the survey to describe both their pre-collegiate Jewish education and their college and graduate experiences. We examined childhood educational experiences because in the American Jewish community; they often represent a major component of adult Jewish knowledge. (See Tables 4, and 5.)

Only the Jewish Studies teachers in the day schools had strong preparation in both education and Jewish content (half of the day school teachers who teach Jewish Studies hold bachelors’ degrees in education or Jewish studies, and the majority of those with bachelors’ degrees also have masters or more advanced degrees).

Among the 134 afternoon school teachers, most (86%) hold Bachelors’ degrees and about half also have masters or doctoral level degrees. However, only about one-third of the college degrees are in education or in Jewish Studies—the fields most relevant to their teaching. About one half of the 62 advanced degrees (masters or doctoral degrees) are in education or Jewish studies. While some afternoon school teachers are well prepared to teach in Jewish schools, a significant portion have had little or no training regarding how to teach, as well as little or no in-depth study of Judaism or Hebrew as adults. The childhood education of these teachers would not sufficiently offset this deficit as most congregational teachers attended supplementary schools only once or twice a week before and after age 13 and rated their Hebrew language proficiency as moderate. (See Table 6.)

Almost half the preschool teachers do not hold bachelors’ degrees and only a few hold masters degrees.⁸ In addition, although expected to enact a Jewish-based

⁸ These findings on educational background are in keeping with those in JESNA study (Rosenblatt, 2007).

curriculum, they did not themselves have much, if any, Jewish education growing up. The majority of preschool teachers (58%) had no Jewish education.

As we have said, we believe that having earned a bachelor's degree and having significant background in education and Jewish studies are relevant qualifications for teachers in Jewish schools. Given that a significant number of our teachers do not have this background, it's imperative that we think proactively about these two things: 1) how to develop and attract more people with strong qualifications to our schools – and perhaps more important – 2) how to develop systems that will provide current teachers with significant learning in these areas, allocating time for teacher learning both during the school year and over the summer.

Opportunities for Professional Interaction and Professional Growth:

Time and Money Allocated for Professional Growth: Among all the schools we surveyed, there is little time allocated for teachers to work together, to talk together, or to observe one another's classes. These activities are particularly rare in afternoon school settings. Teachers were asked a series of questions that dealt with whether time was allocated to participate in "joint work" for a variety of important professional purposes. (See Tables 7 and 8.) They were asked to signal their agreement or disagreement with statements like:

- Teachers have many opportunities to collaborate with other teachers on their instructional practices.
- Time is set aside for teachers to examine teaching practices together.
- Teachers work together on curriculum development.
- In this school time is set aside for teachers to study Jewish content.
- In this school time is set aside for teachers to work together on instruction.

Of the fourteen schools, only two afternoon schools and one day school set aside time for teachers to work together on instruction and to examine teaching practices together. Time to work on curriculum development was allocated in just one preschool, one day school and one afternoon school. Afternoon schools did provide some dedicated time to teachers studying Jewish content. Without time, schools

cannot build robust professional cultures in which teachers and educational leaders can work collaboratively on improving student learning and teaching.

Of course, paying for additional teacher time and creating ongoing opportunities for teachers to learn requires financial resources. It is interesting to note that when administrators were asked how much of their school budget was allocated for professional development, about half of school heads did not respond or said they did not know; and several indicated that the amount was less than one percent of the school budget. The issue of finding financial resources to pay teachers for professional development work will certainly need to be addressed in order to create more supportive environments for teacher learning. The National Staff Development Council, a non-profit professional association devoted to staff development and school improvement, suggests that schools allocate at least 10 % of their budgets to staff development.⁹

Classroom Observations as a Mode of Professional Development: Time is a necessary condition for productive collaborative professional development to happen, but having enough time is not sufficient. Teachers also need structures for learning together in which they can share challenges and dilemmas of teaching. One key structure of this sort is classroom observations -- opportunities for teachers both to observe and be observed as they work. Imagine trying to be a novelist who never read anyone else's novels, a surgeon who never saw another surgeon operate; an athlete who never got feedback from a coach. Watching colleagues engaged in similar work and getting feedback from others on their own work is a crucial part of how skilled practitioners get better at what they do. Our survey, therefore, asked teachers whether an administrator had visited their classes and whether they had opportunities to visit other teachers' classrooms during the past year. We were surprised to find that neither opportunity was common.

Specifically, we found that over the course of the entire past year, only 28% percent of day school teachers, 14% of preschool teachers and 9% of afternoon school teachers had observed another colleague during one complete period or lesson. Similarly, only 30% of day school teachers, 17% of congregational teachers

⁹ <http://www.nsd.org/library/authors/NSDCPlan.cfm>

and 7% of preschool teachers reported that they had been observed by a colleague. Observation by administrators was no more frequent. Only 26% of day school teachers, 19% of congregational school teachers and 7% of preschool teachers were observed for a complete lesson or period by their principals. (See Figure 1.)

Of course, for the purposes of learning, being observed is not enough; one must receive feedback from the observer. In those relatively few cases when an administrator observed teachers, the administrator gave feedback or held a conversation with the teacher about two-thirds of the time. When colleagues observed one another, they talked about the observations afterward about half the time.

Our survey suggests, that as essential as they are for professional learning, peer and administrator classroom observations are happening relatively infrequently. Even when they do happen, they don't necessarily include the feedback that would help them function to improve instruction. We believe that, as things stand, there are significant practical obstacles to classroom observations occurring on a regular basis, and that they won't occur with any frequency unless they are actively built into the infrastructure – including the class schedule, the budget, and the staffing structures (perhaps hiring an additional teacher who could “float” to cover others' classrooms while they are observing each other). Creating such an infrastructure is a piece of the work that lies before our community and our educational leaders.

Additional Opportunities for Professional Development: While “professional development” for teachers sounds good, it turns out that not everything called “professional development” is necessarily enriching or effective. Research shows that there are particular characteristics of professional development that promote teacher learning – and that these characteristics are relatively rare in the programs typically offered to teachers.

There is growing consensus about the characteristics of professional development¹⁰ that promote teacher learning. Effective professional development must focus on content related to instruction and incorporate opportunities for

¹⁰ Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1996); Goldenberg, C., & Gallimore, R. (1991); Lieberman, A. (1996). Little, J. W. (1993); Lord, B (1994); McDiarmid, G. (1994).

participants to reflect on their own teaching practices. In short, the best professional development efforts for teachers do the following:

- model strong pedagogical practices
- connect to the subject matter, not just to generic teaching practices
- happen in collaborative environments
- are designed as cumulative and continue over time
- incorporate individual reflection¹¹

Based on this literature about professional development, our survey asked teachers to indicate all the types of professional development activities in which they participated in the school year prior to the survey. Teachers then selected the one professional development experience they believed was most valuable to their professional growth and described a number of features of that experience. (See Tables 9 and 10.)

These features include:

- sustained over time, with content connected across sessions
- connected to the subject matter that they teach, i.e. Jewish content
- targeted to a specific audience such as preschool teachers or a particular school faculty
- attended as part of a school team or entire faculty rather than as an individual
- grounded in investigation into actual practice and/or encompasses opportunities to reflect on one's own practice
- school-based

Although some of these desirable characteristics occur in the professional development activities attended by Bay Area teachers, there is still considerable distance to travel to make these opportunities highly effective, as the majority of offerings seem to lack the multiple features described by Knapp and others. (See Table 11.)

Considering only teachers who teach Jewish studies (all preschool, all congregational, and Jewish Studies teachers in day schools), fewer than half of their professional development of experiences had a focus on Jewish content. And while

¹¹ Knapp (2003).

we know that working together in teams helps bring learning into practice, approximately half of the professional development experiences teachers described were attended as individuals.

Along with working together as faculty teams, it is important to have continuity over time of focus areas for professional learning. Of the sessions reported, 39% had 6 or more sessions, while 28% were only one session. About one-third had 6 or more sessions where the content was connected across the sessions.

Of special concern, 31% of congregational teachers did not attend any professional development in the year prior to the survey, even though they were teaching in Bay Area Jewish schools during that year. Given the relatively poor educational backgrounds in Judaism of many of our teachers, these findings regarding professional development leave us without confidence that the majority of teachers are developing deeper Jewish content knowledge in a systematic way, or more pedagogical expertise, on the job.

Potential Crisis in Preschool Teaching Recruitment. Almost 25% of current preschool teachers are over age 60, and another 44% are between 40 and 60 years old. (See Table 12.) Along with this, preschool teachers indicate great dissatisfaction with their salaries. Although the salaries are equivalent to other not-for-profit preschools, they are lower than those in the public sector and at college campus settings. Given the large number of teachers who will be retiring soon – and the lack of pay as an incentive-- it's crucial that we attend to creating salaries and working conditions that will retain and attract qualified preschool teachers. As a guideline, leaders of Jewish preschools should attempt to provide beginning teachers, at minimum, the average prevailing salary in publicly-sponsored pre-schools and college campus preschools, which was \$34,000 for the academic year 2007-2008.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In many ways, the conditions portrayed in this report describe not only the schools participating in the Bay Area MTEI program, but most schools in other Jewish communities and in general education settings as well. Schools, for the most part, lack strong professional communities, and teacher isolation persists. In most

schools, time is not provided for teachers to work together on curriculum and instruction; professional conversation and learning from colleagues is very limited. The lack of these features are indicators of weak professional cultures and in general signal less effective conditions for student learning.

There are, however, very positive elements in the Bay Area schools, which we believe suggest great potential for improving the quality of teaching and learning in them. Our study demonstrates that there is very fertile ground for creating a thriving professional environment for teachers, which in turn will create a vibrant learning environment for students. But work will need to be done to achieve that vision. We urge the community to take concrete steps to develop a plan so that teachers have the on-going resources to become more knowledgeable about their subject matter and to become ever more skillful teachers.

Here are some steps that our community might take to transform our schools into more thriving centers of learning:

- 1. Create a vision of a robust professional culture and professional learning and the infrastructure it requires.**

Part of the reason that we do not have robust professional cultures in schools is that they are not the norm in schooling more widely, and we in Jewish education have not invested in developing a vision of what this would look like in our schools. Together, we can create such a collective vision and then develop the resources – financial and otherwise – to help bring this vision to life in our schools.

- 2. Transform school leaders into instructional leaders.**

Typically, school leaders are asked to take on a large number of responsibilities that have little to do with the intellectual life of the school. In addition to trying to lead the school's educational effort, many school leaders are called upon to take on tasks that might be taken on by someone with less educational expertise; such obligations include, balancing the books, directing traffic in the parking lot, calling the plumber, calling the parents of sick children, ordering the books, ordering the hamantashen. These are all essential functions – but the number of them make it next to impossible for school leaders to work with their faculties on learning more about teaching.

How can we free up our leaders to focus on teaching and learning? Doing this might require creative new staffing structures. Some schools may create a new position for a senior professional¹²—director of professional development. In day

¹² Holtz, B. et. al. 1997.

schools, instructional leadership might become the central responsibility of an assistant head, a department head or a professional development leader.¹³ In some cases, more administrative help or volunteer support might be necessary. But whatever the particular circumstances, if we want robust professional cultures of learning to come to life, we need to support school leaders with additional finances, education, and personnel, so that they are able to make the growth of teachers central to their work.

3. Define professional development as part of the job.

The teachers we surveyed at Bay Area Jewish schools take very seriously their role as Jewish educators, and a significant number of them intend to keep working as Jewish educators. But they do not have regular access to learning more about their craft. Building on the commitment and longevity of our teachers, we have the opportunity to define on-going participation in professional development as part of what it means to teach in a Jewish school. Expanding their work in this way will require expanded resources. These investments in professional development will pay off in a more skilled teaching corps, which in turn will have a powerful impact on the Jewish education our children receive.

4. Create professional development opportunities that enable all teachers to develop a deeper understanding of Jewish content and of how to teach Jewish content meaningfully to students of various ages.

We are currently expecting teachers without adequate understanding of Judaism to help our children develop understanding and connection to Judaism. It's an impossible task. We need to support our teachers to do their work by deepening their own understanding of Judaism and of how they can bring alive the core ideas and texts of Judaism for their students.

5. Allocate the resources to bring this vision alive.

The way in which any institution or community allocates money reflects its priorities and values. On this issue, our actions belie our rhetoric. We cannot demand that our teachers produce “the people of the book,” if they themselves are not such people. We are at risk of not having the teachers we need, particularly in early childhood education. Providing better salaries and benefits is a crucial part of addressing this likely shortage. It would indeed be a powerful example of “putting our money where our mouth is” if Jewish schools actually paid teachers at a rate that communicated that teachers are held by the community in high esteem.

¹³ In ongoing research done by The New Induction Project, a research and development initiative of the Mandel Center for Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, the importance of a person responsible for professional development was noted as a key factor in creating the structures and culture necessary to support new teachers as they enter a school.

According to most of the research being reported by the National Staff Development Council, 10% of a school's budget should be earmarked for professional development. No blanket percentage works for every institution; it makes sense to look at each school's budget for staff and work from there. However, the needs are clear: ongoing professional development requires a vision, a plan, infrastructure support and human and financial resources.

One of the great strengths of the Jewish people has been its ability to transmit its core values and texts to successive generations. The words of the Shema challenge us: *v'shinantem l'vanekha...* teach your children diligently. Our rabbis teach us that our teachers are our children's parents when it comes to teaching them Torah. We hope this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how our community might support our teachers and educational leaders to carry on this sacred work.

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