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Cultures of Jewish Education *How Communities Address Local Educational Needs*

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Imagine a stadium in which a dozen or more teams are engaged in a variety of sports events. Players run pell-mell through each other's space and haphazardly lob baseballs, basketballs, footballs, tennis balls and other paraphernalia suitable for their particular sport, with little conscious attention paid to other events being staged on the same field. A few referees frantically attempt to organize the anarchy in the stadium. In the stands, a significant number of people sit with their backs to the action, while a vocal minority of fans cheers for their favorite teams. Some team owners and their wealthy friends are busy negotiating deals to fund sporting events; a few are also working to bring some order out of the chaos unfolding below them. This is how the field of Jewish education in the United States might well appear to an observer somewhere above the fray.¹

Local Jewish communities around the country typically contain an impressive array of educational institutions and programs that rarely interact with one another, let alone intersect with those in other communities. In a typical middle- or large-size community one can find most, if not all, of the following forms of Jewish educational offerings: a few all-day Jewish schools, often reflecting the denominational orientation of different sectors of the local populace, educate a minority of Jewish children. Most synagogues run their own supplementary schools at least through the bar/bat mitzvah years, and sometimes through high school, which serve the majority of children obtaining a Jewish education.² Both synagogues and Jewish Community

Centers (JCCs) offer early childhood programs with some Jewish content. Then there are youth movement activities for teenagers, sponsored either by the denominations or individual synagogues; of late, more of these are organized by a community-wide agency. In many localities camping programs—both overnight and day camps—are sponsored by the JCC, congregations, and private entrepreneurs. And quite a few local federations of philanthropy also organize and heavily subsidize teen trips to Israel that have a strong educational component. Not to be overlooked are educational programs for adults that take the form of family education offered by synagogue schools and day schools, adult education classes provided by congregations and JCCs, and in recent years, more systematic courses following curricula developed outside of the local community by the Wexner Heritage Foundation based in New York, the Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools developed in Jerusalem and Chicago, and the Meah curriculum devised by Boston Hebrew College.

All of these are voluntary organizations: they operate in a competitive environment, recruiting learners and enlisting financial support through fees, donations, and other forms of philanthropy. Educators must be savvy to consumer needs and must market their educational programs. This quintessential American template is one of the factors militating against centralized planning. A chief concern of this chapter is whether voluntarism and competition also discourage efforts to achieve new levels of coordination in the way learners are channeled from one program to the next, in the way educators at one institution regard their counterparts at others, and in the way schools and programs relate to one another.

With the exception of the adult education offerings, most Jewish educational programs have emerged through the independent efforts of local individuals and institutions—that is, without any coordinated, let alone central, planning. Federations of Jewish philanthropy, the natural organizing agent in local communities, long shied away from active involvement with Jewish education, thereby creating a vacuum to be filled by others. The post–World War II suburban boom also played a role in the splintering of Jewish education: whereas quite a few communities in the decades between the world wars had a communal system of Jewish education at least for youngsters, that structure collapsed when congregations insisted on offering their own supplementary school programs and Jewish populations moved ever further away from central gathering places. The same era also marked the emergence of Jewish day schools through the initiative of interested funders and parents. Even communal day schools were largely organized and supported privately. Some reversal of these centrifugal pressures occurred in the closing two decades of the twentieth century, as federations or other funding agencies began to experiment with community-wide programs, mainly in the realm of informal, rather than formal, education for teens either locally or on Israel trips. But the historical trajectory of Jewish education over the past sixty-five years has been toward diffusion rather than coordination, let alone integration.

If any local institutions are likely to work at the task of educational integration, they are the federation and the central agency for Jewish education (which is often

an arm of the federation). The federation of Jewish philanthropy, an umbrella for fund-raising and allocations to local agencies, through the power of its purse, could work to persuade local schools, programs, and other educational institutions to coordinate their efforts. Furthermore, as the planning arm of the local community, the federation could foster reflection about Jewish education, which, after all, is about an investment in human resources, especially for the next generation. Central agencies, for their part, might also play such a role, if for no other reason than that they act as partners with educational institutions: they generally work with educators, particularly with school heads and teachers, offering in-service training programs and curricular assistance. By virtue of their connection with a wide range of institutions, they have unparalleled entrée into local institutions of Jewish education, and their staff members are likely to see the “big picture” of local Jewish education.

On the national level, a few organizations potentially could play a coordinating role too: departments of Jewish education sponsored by the major religious movements and agencies supported by the federation world or major donors might have the resources to understand the larger scene, but given the wide dispersal of U.S. Jews in hundreds of localities around the country, it is difficult for national agencies to reach into communities very effectively. At best, such agencies work with a particular type of educational institution—for example, the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, based in Boston, works with day schools; other newly focused agencies work with the sleep-away camps or early childhood programs or schools with a particular denominational orientation. Ultimately, these national umbrella bodies are limited in their reach and effectiveness because, to borrow a phrase from the late Democratic Party power broker, Tip O’Neill, all Jewish schooling and educational politics are local. That is where the actual work of educating takes place and where the organization of Jewish education must occur.

Mindful of that reality, this chapter seeks to understand how local communities go about the business of ensuring the support and stability of local programs of Jewish education. To what extent do they coordinate the work of various institutions? Do they conceive of Jewish education locally as a linked network of educating agencies or rather as a set of loosely connected, if not entirely uncoupled, schools, programs, and institutions? Have some communities created models of integration, and if so, have those efforts made a difference to the learners, educators, the educational programs themselves?

In order to examine these questions, I selected seven Jewish communities of various sizes and in different regions of the United States for analysis and comparison. What follows are portraits of how each of these communities “does” Jewish education, and how a range of historical, regional, and cultural factors have shaped their particular approaches.³ Among the issues to be discussed are the role of the local federation as a champion of Jewish education, the constraints placed on local bureaus of Jewish education and their efforts to transcend their limitations, the presence of other players who take Jewish education seriously, the impact of national institutions on local affairs; and the role of foundations and other potential

champions of Jewish education. The focus will then shift from the unit of the individual community to broader challenges confronting the Jewish educational enterprise across the country and the factors that affect the ability of communities to develop a measure of coordination in their systems of Jewish education. (Readers who are less interested in the historical and cultural factors shaping the way specific Jewish communities conduct themselves are welcome to skip to the more general and comparative reflections, commencing with the section titled “One Size Does Not Fit All,” immediately after the discussion of the San Francisco community.)

A Tale of Seven Communities

Atlanta

A visitor to the Jewish community of Atlanta cannot but be struck by its boom-town atmosphere. In 1995, an article in the *American Jewish Year Book* estimated Atlanta's Jewish population as numbering 67,500 souls; by 2004, the same annual reported a population of 86,000. Some locals are convinced the number is closer to 100,000 Jews. With a growth rate of anywhere between 30 and 50 percent in less than a decade, Atlanta's Jewish community has been buoyed by its rapid expansion. Equally important, the institutions of the community have grown in number and membership. The Marcus Jewish Community Center has expanded from a few thousand members to more than seven thousand. Over the past few decades, the number of synagogue supplementary schools shot up from seven to more than thirty. During the 1990s, day school education expanded with the addition of a Reform day school, a community high school, and Haredi schools.

This growth in itself would have engendered a sense of positive momentum, but the larger culture of Atlanta has further inspired a mood of optimism. The city itself and its environs see themselves as the capital of the “New South,” and, indeed, the emergence of affluent neighborhoods has spurred an ethos of boosterism. Atlantans talk up their city; optimism is in the air. As one longtime resident put it: “There is a sense that this community is good and works well.” Some who are a bit more self-critical also talk of a culture of “superficiality” that pervades the South—“be nice and make others look good” are the watchwords. Still, the communal disposition is sunny. And all this has rubbed off on local Jews who speak just as glowingly about their community.

Growth, however, has not been an unalloyed boon for the Atlanta Jewish community. Even as it has brought a sense of positive momentum and the promise of exciting new initiatives, it has sorely stretched the capacities of communal institutions. As Jewish families move further away from the city to northern suburbs and with no river or mountains to curb their geographic dispersal, the Jewish population is gravitating ever further from the orbit of central institutions. This has placed great strains on the federation, Jewish Community Centers, and also day schools,

even as it has also eroded the membership of some of the older established synagogues in or near the city itself. A new demographic study of the northern suburbs released in 2004 reports that a third of the households in those areas are intermarried and only 41 percent belong to a synagogue, even as nearly two-thirds assert that being Jewish is “very important” to them; many Jews in those suburbs claim they would join a Jewish Community Center if one were built nearby, but there is no such facility as yet.⁴

When an outsider asks locals to identify the center of gravity in Atlanta’s Jewish educational scene, the usual response is a look of bafflement. The federation regards itself as a convener (of educators, lay leaders, and so forth) but not as an initiator of change. This, as we will see, is fairly typical of federations in other parts of the country. Critics of the federation’s educational efforts point to two glaring symptoms of a more glaring failing. One occurred when two day schools, the Epstein School (a Conservative day school in the Solomon Schechter network) and the Weber School, a community high school, each needed to expand and talks were held to resettle them together on a single property. The effort failed, thereby denying both schools of potential cost savings, and some of the blame for the failed partnership has fallen on the federation leadership. The federation is also regarded as aloof from the concerns of synagogues. It does not fund synagogue-based Jewish education and is seen as stand-offish regarding the difficulties faced by synagogues. (Those who are sympathetic to the federation note that every time it tries to involve itself, it gets slammed for meddling.)

Atlanta is unusual in that it functioned for a number of years without a central agency for Jewish education. As part of the larger agenda of North American federations in the 1990s to promote “Jewish continuity,” the Atlanta federation’s Continuity Commission assumed responsibility for educational decision making. The Bureau of Jewish Education was deemed irrelevant, and, in the words of one local, was “assassinated.” After five years without a central agency, it became clear that the community needed an advocate of Jewish education. The tasks of several small educational programs were combined under the umbrella of a newly organized Jewish Educational Services. Aside from providing resources and services to educators, the new entity will also tie together some loose ends: it will sponsor teen programming, oversee a school for the learning disabled, and run the Atlanta supplementary high school. Thus far, it has played no role in either accrediting schools or attending to the licensing of educators. The oversight of schools comes from demanding parents, not from any formal community agency. It remains to be seen whether the newly created Jewish Educational Services will serve as a coordinating and accrediting body for Jewish education in the area, let alone as an agency capable of raising new funds for the field, or whether it will be marginalized, as was its predecessor.

Despite the absence of a central leadership for Jewish education, there is considerable strength in key local institutions. The Jewish Community Center has taken a leading role owing to the forceful leadership of its professional staff, beginning with its top executive. Aside from the usual complement of early childhood pro-

grams and summer camping, what distinguishes the Marcus JCC is its active role in the promotion of adult education. The JCC has imported the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School system, serving as the purveyor of this two-year program. In recognition of the positive track record of Atlanta's Melton program, the Avi Chai Foundation designated the community as one of the recipients of pilot grants for special Melton classes aimed at parents of preschool children, a program based on the belief that Jewishly educated parents make better informed decisions for their children's education and will also serve as stronger role models for their children. Within the community, observers of Jewish life already claim to see a measurable impact of the Melton program: "The learning circles back to every type of institution," notes one educator, as the program's graduates enrich the community.

Atlanta's Jewish day schools are another source of local educational strength. Atlanta boasts lower schools spanning the spectrum from Haredi to modern Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. It also has several Orthodox high schools and a community day high school. Roughly 2,200 children attend these diverse schools out of a total Jewish school population of approximately 5,700 enrolled children. Most observers agree that these schools are all outreach-oriented to one extent or another in that they appeal to parents who themselves were not products of a day school education. Most would also agree that enrollments grew in part as a result of desegregation and the rise of a private school culture in the area. As Jews move to northern suburbs, it remains to be seen whether day school enrollments will keep pace in locales where the public schools are considered more attractive.

As is the case in other communities, the high costs of day school education creates serious challenges to families who wish to enroll their children and to the federations, which have finite resources. The day schools of Atlanta are the primary recipient of federation funding to Jewish educational programs, with roughly one-quarter of local allocations by the federation going to day schools. Still, the average per capita grant by the federation is now \$775, as compared with \$803 just a few years ago. (The funding formula to arrive at each school's per capita allotment varies greatly depending on the age of the school; not surprisingly, the discrepancies provoke suspicion on all sides as to who is getting preferential treatment from the federation.) With most of the day schools eking out a bare existence, local observers are convinced that the federation would not rescue a fiscally failing school.

Beyond the JCC and the day schools, Atlanta boasts an unusual source of educational energy and talent—the local Orthodox Kollel, or school of advanced study for ordained rabbis. Founded as an offshoot of the Ner Israel Yeshiva in Baltimore, the Atlanta Scholars Kollel provides a cadre of men and women as teachers for the entire community. Unlike other such institutions, the Atlanta Kollel strongly encourages its fellows to participate in the educational life of the community. Members of the Kollel teach in venues across the city, including in private homes, business offices, non-Jewish private schools, and a Reform temple. Proudly proclaiming its mission as transcending the classroom, the Kollel boasts: "Whether you're Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, unaffiliated or somewhere in between,

Scholars Kollel . . . is your most vibrant source for Jewish learning in Atlanta.”⁵ The Kollel’s home base is a synagogue, popularly known as the “Kollel Dome,” that offers Orthodox religious services but also keeps its parking lot open on the Sabbath for worshippers who drive to the synagogue.⁶ The fellows—and their wives—in short, are part of the pool of Jewish educators on which the Atlanta Jewish community draws.

One additional asset of the Atlanta Jewish community is the relative lack of turnover among its key personnel. Rabbis and educators generally remain in the community for a long period, largely because of a conscious effort to retain people. In the view of one longtime educator, the community has felt itself to be a backwater not always capable of picking and choosing its personnel. Rather than dismiss educators and rabbis who were professionally weak in some areas, the lay leadership mentored with them patiently, teaching them how the community operates and what professionalism demands. It is hard to know how well this approach worked, but Atlantans extol the quality of their educational and professional leaders, who through their energy and talent make up for the fact that the community has not as yet pulled its educational programs together with any coherence.

Boston

If the Atlanta Jewish community is characterized by rapid and recent population growth, the heady atmosphere of the New South, and a set of institutions in the act of self-creation, the Boston Jewish community is rooted in far older, established traditions. It has a venerable history, having been the first in the United States to organize a federation, the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in 1895. It also boasts several major institutions of higher learning, most notably, Brandeis University, one of two U.S. universities founded under Jewish auspices, and the Boston Hebrew College, one of the oldest Jewish teachers colleges in the country. Boston’s Bureau of Jewish Education can properly claim to be “the first truly communal agency for Jewish education in the United States,”⁷ a bureau renowned in the early decades of the century for its pioneering work in the teaching of Hebrew language skills and a sophisticated program of five-day-a-week supplementary education offered in a communal, rather than synagogue, setting.⁸ Its teachers’ and principals’ associations were among the oldest in the nation, as was its Orthodox Maimonides School, founded in 1937 by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and his wife, Tonya, among the first day schools outside of New York City.⁹ In brief, Boston is a community with an educational infrastructure that can boast of having deep roots.

Insiders are convinced that the traditions of Boston itself have greatly influenced the way the community operates. With a large array of institutions of higher learning, Greater Boston prides itself on its commitment to ideas. So too, writes historian Jonathan Sarna, “what is distinctive about Jewish Boston . . . [is] its enchantment with the life of the mind.”¹⁰ This appreciation for serious ideas extends to all sectors of the community and certainly characterizes the modern Orthodox

sector, which was nurtured by the late Rabbi Soloveitchik, who impressed a strong Litvak (Lithuanian) stamp on his Orthodox followers. Professionals who have moved to the community note the cerebral proclivities of Boston's Jewish population as compared with their counterparts in other localities.

Bostonians also value their distinctive culture and insist on inventing their own models. Not accidentally, Boston's Jewish community has eschewed national efforts toward Jewish educational and religious revitalization—such as Synagogue 2000 and the STAR initiative in the realm of synagogue transformation or the ECE program in Jewish education—in favor of homegrown programs. To be sure, there is also an element of elitism in the Boston way, and not surprisingly, its Jews have gravitated to key charismatic personalities at critical turning points in the community's history.¹¹ Ideology and leadership have long been the hallmarks of the local Jewish culture, and also of Boston.

New England forms of governance also have shaped the way the community functions. Just as local towns insist on having their own police departments and conducting business their own way, so too do Jewish institutions vie for independence. This inclination has no doubt complicated efforts to coordinate and systematize Jewish education, but it also has led to some competition between educational institutions to try something different. For these reasons, innovation is not feared, but embraced, despite the self-awareness within the community of its own historical lineage.

It is virtually impossible to conduct a conversation about Jewish education in Boston without coming back to the major role played by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies and its longtime chief executive, Barry Shrage. Even well beyond his own community, Shrage has captured attention as a cheerleader and champion of Jewish education. Beyond the sheer exuberance of his boosterism, Shrage has seen to it that the Boston CJP has enshrined his perspective in its own literature. The most recent Strategic Plan for the CJP (issued in 1998) defined a tripartite mission for the Boston Jewish community, the first of which is to serve as a “community of learning”: the study claims that the “community has reached broad agreement about the need to vastly expand Jewish literacy and learning and facilitate a Jewish cultural renaissance through increased support for formal and informal Jewish education for people of all ages and increased attention to emerging institutions of Jewish culture.”¹² The plan goes on to call for a communal program to “promote life-long learning,” “strengthen and transform our educational system to make Hebrew schools, Jewish day schools and Hillels more exciting, attractive, alive places of learning and community,” and “create opportunities to experience and express Jewish culture” (15–16). Although the plan makes a specific reference to the need for “strengthening and transforming our educational system” (17), it is silent about how to coordinate various programs in order to create an integrated system, rather than an uncoordinated assemblage of discrete institutions and programs. Significantly, the plan sets a goal for the CJP to serve as “a communal broker that uses its financial resources, as well as its networks of influence, human resources,

organizational relationships and access to knowledge to create a sense of common direction, shared purpose and vision to reinforce the bonds of community" (28). In other words, the CJP aims to strengthen the field of Jewish education through the power of its words, its clear sense of direction, and its connections.

In fact, this has been the hallmark of the new "Boston system," a term once employed to characterize the program of Jewish education that held sway in the first decades of the twentieth century. The new Boston system has worked with relatively meager financial resources and few champions of Jewish education among the wealthy laity, yet nonetheless the CJP has launched a series of initiatives that were sharply focused, thoughtfully conceived, innovative—and that few people believed would actually succeed. But in some important ways, they have worked.

The engine driving much of the change was the Commission on Jewish Continuity and Education established by the CJP in 1989. Although the commission has evolved over time, it has throughout consisted of key lay leaders who have a strong interest in the range of Jewish educational ventures—family education, Israel trips, teen programming, day schools, congregational schools, camping, and other types of Jewish education. As time has gone on, the commission has served, in the words of one participant, as a vehicle "for champions of Jewish education to have an avenue for their championing."

The first initiative was in the arena of Jewish family education, then the rage in other parts of the country. The CJP established the Sh'arim program in cooperation with the Bureau of Jewish Education to create full-time family educators to involve parents in their children's Jewish education. By 2005, it employed sixteen full-time family educators housed at a dozen congregations, two Jewish Community Centers, and two day schools, and the program claimed to have reached ten thousand Jewish families. Next, the commission moved on to adult Jewish education, playing a role in the founding of the two-year Meah curriculum coordinated by the Boston Hebrew College. By 2005, it reported running twenty-one classes in thirty-six institutions with more than 500 students and more than 1,700 graduates. In 2004, the commission on its own founded a pilot program at five sites called Ikarim that targeted parents of preschool-age children for a version of the Meah program geared to the specific needs of young families. The goal was to shape the thinking of parents who were on the verge of making Jewish educational decisions for their young children. Another initiative called YESOD, the Youth Educator Initiative, employed fifteen full-time youth educators and four part-time ones by 2005, who offered shared services to a number of different institutions. Most recently, a new venture called NOAR aims to involve teens in community planning, and a second program, the Leadership Development Institute, helps synagogues develop their own leadership. The total CJP allocations for these programs rose from \$2.8 million in 1993–94 to \$6.5 million in 2003–4.¹³

In the most recent summary of its current strategic goals, the Commission on Jewish Continuity and Education pays attention to the need for greater integration: it speaks of integrating pre- and post-Israel experiences for teens,¹⁴ and it describes

a goal for a newly created Day School Advocacy Forum (DAF) as developing and implementing “a strategy for a synergistic relationship between synagogues, pre-schools and day schools.”¹⁵ Implicitly, it recognizes that for all its achievements, the Boston system lacks a clear transition from one type of institution to the next.

The CJP and its commission have developed most of their programs in collaboration with several other important institutional players. One is the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston. As noted earlier, the BJE had a venerable history in the first half of the twentieth century, developing an educational system that insisted on curriculum, compensation, and school standards. By the 1940s, this system began to fail with the movement toward suburbanization, which scattered the Jewish population, and the growth of the Conservative and Reform movements, which ran their own supplementary schools, rather than encouraged their youth to attend communal schools. The bureau endured tough times in the third quarter of the twentieth century but could also draw on a distinguished history when the time for rebuilding came in the 1980s.

The current bureau runs a variety of programs especially aimed at school directors. Whereas the bureau once focused primarily on teachers and licensing, teacher accreditation is currently a low priority in the field, and school administrators are regarded as the educators of teachers. Hence the BJE works with school principals and mid-level people. The BJE also offers services to institutions such as camps, JCCs, day schools, and supplementary schools, helping them develop their committee and board structures. It also gets good grades for convening day school directors, who range across the spectrum from Haredi to Reform. Despite its role as a provider of this panoply of services, the bureau, like its counterparts in many American communities, struggles to carve a niche for itself in a community with strong federation committees involved in educational planning and a constellation of other competing institutions. Given its limited resources and the strength of other institutions in the Jewish education arena, the bureau has difficulty making itself heard above the din of competition, let alone to play its former role as the czar of local Jewish education. The bureau’s advocacy in behalf of content, skills, and knowledge also appears staid in a community eager for Jewish passion, if not razzle-dazzle.

A major winner in the reconfiguration of Jewish education in Boston undoubtedly is the Hebrew College. The CJP turned to the college to develop the Meah curriculum, and that investment now has yielded rich benefits. Not only has the program raised the local profile of a once sleepy institution, Meah is now going national, with eight sites in communities such as New York, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Orlando. Its franchise operation may well continue beyond the two-year course of study, as the college has developed a Meah Graduate Institute to take graduates of the Meah program on diverse tracks, ranging from the study of classical texts to Jewish thought, cultural history, and spirituality.

The Hebrew College has also won kudos for its revitalized Prozdor program for high school students. For many decades the Prozdor was known as a program

intensely Hebraic in focus and instruction. As that program languished and a new community high school began to siphon off students, the Hebrew College was challenged by the CJP to develop a new model. The new Prozdor makes the study of Hebrew language entirely optional and offers a menu of formal and informal education, as well as options to study for two, four, or six hours weekly. The range of choices has captured the imagination of young people (see the essay in this volume by Sylvia Barack Fishman). Suddenly, close to one thousand high school students now descend on the new campus of the Hebrew College each week.¹⁶

Boston also supports fourteen Jewish day schools, ranging in denominational affiliation from Reform to Haredi and Chabad, with quite a few communal schools. Among the latter, the Gann Academy, founded in 1997 as the New Jewish High School, is regarded as the most recently added jewel in the communal crown. Housed on a large new campus, boasting an attractive and spacious school building, as well as expansive sports fields, the Gann Academy created a revolution through its sheer ambition. It set the pace by raising a significant amount of money for its campus. Recently, the CJP announced a new \$45 million mega-gift from two donors to create "peerless excellence" in the three denominational lower schools—Maimonides (Orthodox), Schechter (Conservative), and Rashi (Reform). The gift represented a break from past tradition when day schools were very much on their own and could hope for only modest support from the CJP. (In fact, the CJP per capita contribution for day school children still ranks in the lower third of federations across the country.) But the CJP did play a role in developing the gift, and in the process has set a standard of moral support that other communities now feel some pressure to match.¹⁷ (Day schools in Boston also benefit from the local presences of a day school advocacy committee connected to the CJP, called DAF, which promotes and markets day schools, and the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, a national organization supported by major funders from across the country that offers marketing and other consultative services for day schools.)

Two other vehicles in the community for the delivery of Jewish education are the Jewish Community Centers and the synagogues. The former offer the usual preschool and camping programs, but barely register on the communal radar screen as important players in the field of Jewish education. They are perceived as overly concerned with appearing too Jewish, and of mounting no serious educational initiatives. Interestingly, the synagogues are also seen as secondary. True, they support large supplementary school programs. And they have also benefited from the adult education of their members through the Meah program, the teen education offered by Prozdor, and the Sh'arim and Ikarim programs aimed at their families. But rabbis are generally not perceived as significant voices in communal discussions about Jewish education, and the programs offered by synagogue supplementary schools are not pointed to with pride. Quite the contrary, Prozdor is often depicted as a success because it could provide for teens what their own synagogues could not offer.¹⁸ But if the community has been so successful in raising the banner of Jewish education, why have synagogue supplementary schools not benefited as well? And if the Meah

program, which self-consciously is designed to foster the transformation of local Jewish institutions has been such a smashing success, why have its many hundreds of graduates not transformed Jewish education in their own synagogues? The larger question all this raises is: What has the new Boston system wrought?

The sobering answer is that for all the significant effort invested, the results are still mixed. To take one fact, despite all the talk about becoming a community of learning, fewer than half the eligible Jewish children in the Boston area were enrolled in any form of Jewish schooling in 2001–2, some 17,139 out of an estimated population of children between the ages of three and seventeen numbering some 40,000 youths. (There is no reason to assume that the proportions are significantly different elsewhere.) There is also no evidence as yet of an increase in synagogue participation by Meah or Sh'arim alumni, and indeed the programs do not regard the improvement of synagogue or Hebrew skills, let alone religious transformation, as one of their goals. There is also still no documented evidence to indicate that Meah graduates are more impassioned advocates for their own children's Jewish education, although a few prominent Meah graduates are often cited for their newfound activism on behalf of Jewish schools. An evaluation of the Sha'arim program claims that 45 percent of respondents say their attachment to Judaism and commitment to Jewish life have increased, as has attendance at religious services, but, as the authors conceded, it is unclear whether this reflects the impact of the program or the tendency of parents to get more engaged as "part of the developmental process of families with children in religious school."¹⁹

Moreover, despite the optimism and local pride in the innovative programs launched in Boston, it is remarkable how many professionals and lay leaders remain skeptical about the deeper impact of what has been accomplished. There is a sense that for all the talk about Jewish education, hardly any new money has been directed by the community to synagogue schools or even to day schools (the "peerless excellence" gift being a major exception that may or may not turn the tide). And despite the presence in Boston of a distinguished cadre of Jewish academics, intellectuals, and rabbis, no think tank environment has been constructed to tap the expertise of such people when it comes to the big educational issues. The community, moreover, has only begun to think systemically about its offerings in Jewish education: How can it channel preschool children to formal Jewish education? How can teen groups, Prozdor, summer camps, and Israel programs create synergies among their adolescent populations? How can day school educators and supplementary school teachers work effectively with camp directors? And how can a coordinated effort be launched in this community to address the rising costs of Jewish living that are a deterrent to parents who are considering enrolling their children in educational programs?

To pose such questions is to hold the Boston Jewish community to a standard that no Jewish community can meet. But it needs to be said that even in one of the best focused Jewish communities, where all the right messages are delivered regularly and a remarkable infrastructure of Jewish education is in place, much work

remains to be done. It is noteworthy that well-informed insiders recognize the limitations of what they have achieved. They talk about the small sums of serious money flowing into Jewish education. They talk about the fixation of philanthropists on the new, even as they permit core programs to languish with little support. They talk about the incomplete system currently in place, with a continuing divide between the synagogue and federation worlds. And they talk about the sheer luck that made it possible for certain programs to succeed in the absence of serious funding. The revitalization of the Prozdor program is described by its own director as a lucky success that few anticipated; the same is said of the Meah program, which was a grand experiment whose designers were skeptical of its power to succeed. The frequent refrain I heard about so many of these programs is that "no one anticipated what would develop." The same was said of the Gann Academy, formerly known as the New Jewish High School.

Viewed in comparative terms, the Boston effort is unquestionably exemplary and impressive. With an articulate spokesman at the helm of the CJP, eager to advocate on behalf of the virtues of Jewish learning, with some capable professionals to develop programs, and with an environment that fosters connection and engagement and that values ideas, the Boston Jewish community has taken major strides, often despite serious self-doubts. There is perhaps as much to be learned from the risk-taking in Boston as from the actual system developed through the CJP.

The Boston system represents at least a short-term triumph, because the community built new programs and people have come. Some synergies have developed to date between the mix of educational interventions for people of different ages. And the positive "can-do" spirit has taken on a life of its own. By repeatedly invoking success and trumpeting the crucial importance of the "community of learning" model, a new reality was created in Boston where people believed that these programs were successful and meaningful. And despite concerns expressed by many about whether the system is sufficiently inclusive and has reached into all sectors of the community, enough cooperation has been built across institutions that leaders have come to believe that all ships are rising together on a tide produced by the CJP and its charismatic leader.

Chicago

The system of Jewish education in Chicago, as is true of the larger communal enterprise of Jews in the so-called Second City, is a tale of perplexing contradictions. On the one hand, the community has been able to generate quite significant resources for Jewish needs; on the other hand, its educational institutions are lackluster. On the one hand, its federation acts as a powerful force in the community; on the other, there is much diffusion of energy, needless competition, and duplication. On the one hand, there is more talk in Chicago than in any of the other communities studied in this report of raising significant endowments for day schools; on the other, hardly any funds for this purpose have been generated, despite the demonstrated

capacity of the community to raise funds. On the one hand, educational and religious leaders privately refer to the federation as the “Darth Vader” in town, a force that no one wants to battle; on the other, Chicago is probably the only community in North America with three separate central agencies for Jewish education, an almost anarchic situation. On the one hand, the community can boast the longtime presence of two major Jewish institutions of higher learning, Spertus College and the Hebrew Theological College; on the other, most observers regard their contributions to Jewish education as negligible, if not nil.

The contrast with the Boston Jewish experience is quite dramatic. With a population base estimated to be less than 5 percent larger than that of Boston, the Chicago federation generates more than two and a half times as much money in its annual campaign. And the assets of its endowment fund are almost four times greater than that of the CJP in Boston. Like Boston, the Chicago Jewish community can boast of venerable institutions and a serious history of Jewish education. Its Orthodox community, which in most communities is disproportionately invested in Jewish education, constitutes 10 percent of the Jewish population, twice its percentage in Boston. And yet the community has not generated new educational ideas or programs comparable to what Boston Jewry has launched with far more meager financial assets, and it seems not to have tried to develop coordination in its system of institutions. It has even been slow to import programs developed in other communities.

Local observers attribute the Jewish pattern to the larger Chicago culture, claiming that midwestern traditionalism permeates the thinking of Chicago’s Jews. The community values stability, as is evident from the fact that its hundred-year-old federation has been guided by just four chief executives. The Jewish community also prides itself on its successful absorption of newcomers: half the Jewish population was born elsewhere. And the local federation, the Jewish United Fund (JUF), is one of the few to maintain its high level of giving for international Jewish needs. At a time when most federations have slashed their funds for Israel (the Boston federation is a case in point), the JUF continues to allocate \$27.5 million to international needs, almost as much as the entirety of Boston’s annual campaign. Unquestionably, support for Israel is the top priority of the Chicago federation and reflects the determination of the community to stay the course rather than bow to fads.²⁰

The federation prides itself on its strategic thinking and planning role, too. Driven by professionals rather than lay donors, the federation has promoted several new ventures in recent years:

1. A universal entitlement program covering a trip to Israel for all children between the ages of eight and fourteen.
2. A fund to give children who go through educational programs the opportunity to attend Jewish residential summer camps.
3. The federation has created two endowment programs for day schools. The Jewish Day School Guaranty Trust collects money from individuals

who do not wish to designate a single school and then invests those gifts in a pot of money that all the schools can tap; the federation also matches such gifts up to 10 percent of their value. The Individual Day School Endowment Foundation is a support foundation for all day schools, but the moneys are targeted by donors to a school of their choice. Here too the federation offers a match of up to 10 percent.

4. The federation has been working to bring together all professionals working in the area of preschool education.

The JUF demonstrates its commitment to the field by channeling nearly \$7 million annually to educational institutions (and that does not include some \$6 million to Jewish Community Centers, which also offer some programs in Jewish education).²¹ The per capita giving for day school children has now fallen to \$500 per child enrolled in lower and middle schools and \$1,000 for upper-school students in a network that educates approximately 4,600 children enrolled in the fifteen day schools in the metropolitan Chicago area (an enrollment figure that has remained steady in recent years). To be sure, this represents a declining portion of the day school budgets, but that is only because school costs have risen considerably.

Certainly, one of the more noteworthy features of the Chicago system is the existence of three separate central agencies for Jewish education that do not interact with one another. The Bureau of Jewish Education dates back to 1923, and just six years later, the Orthodox community broke off to form the Associated Talmud Torahs. From the perspective of some, this structure made sense because the right-wing Orthodox would not work with the rest of the community, and the division of labor made it possible for all groups to connect with a central agency. Matters grew more complex in the 1990s after a federation continuity commission urged the creation of a new foundation for Jewish education whose task it would be to raise new money for Jewish education. After a few years of feuding between the new foundation and the bureau, the federation decided to disband the bureau entirely and was promptly sued by the latter. Eventually, a *modus vivendi* was reached whereby the three agencies work on parallel and somewhat overlapping tracks—but do not talk, let alone coordinate their work.

The Bureau of Jewish Education primarily runs preschool programs and a learning resource center. It is not supported by the federation. The Associated Talmud Torahs (ATT) works with traditional schools, including some Conservative ones, but mainly with Orthodox schools. It is primarily connected with the day school world to which it channels federation funds, but it also runs a supplementary high school program. It offers consulting services to its schools and works with a range of Orthodox camps, youth movements, and other vehicles of informal Jewish education. The Community Foundation for Jewish Education is engaged with supplemental Jewish education and informal Jewish education. It is a key organizer of Israel trips for people of all ages; it runs programs for supplementary educators; it offers an extensive program of adult Jewish education, including Hebrew

Ulpan programs; and it advises public high schools that provide Hebrew-language courses to fulfill foreign language requirements. Taken together, these three agencies cover a significant range of services, but the fact that they do not communicate with each other is symptomatic of the highly diffuse Chicago network of Jewish education.

Similarly, adult education in the community is uncoordinated. The North American office of the Melton Adult Mini-Schools is located in the city, and not surprisingly there is local interest in the program. But rather than consolidate the effort, the community allows three separate Melton programs to function—one sponsored by the BJE for teacher education, a second for lay people run by the Community Foundation for Jewish Education, and a third by the federation itself for its own leadership. The same curriculum, in short, is employed by three separate organizations operating in the same community, independently of one another.

The Chicago federation invests a significant sum in its system of Jewish Community Centers, but these provide remarkably little Jewish education. The only formal Jewish education offered by the centers is through their early childhood programs. The camps do little in this area, as their staffs are not committed to an educational mission. Remarkably, the Chicago JCCs were among the first to move the JCC movement toward a commitment to Jewish education, and they continue to have a reputation as friendly to the enterprise. But the network offers only weak programming, if any.

Synagogues too are players in the field of Jewish education, but they are rarely mentioned as significant shapers of the community. Rabbis are viewed as aloof from communal educational questions and preoccupied with the day-to-day work of managing large congregations. And while some of the congregational schools draw on denominational support, they seem disconnected from a larger enterprise. To illustrate, one informant spoke of a pulpit rabbi whose congregations sent more than forty youngsters to a JCC camp but who was nonetheless unprepared to pay the camp a visit and do some teaching.

For all the talk about the strength of the federation, the reality is that the Chicago community does not function in an integrated fashion. To be sure, the geographic spread of the community is daunting—and becoming even more so as highly mobile Jews settle in ever more distant suburbs. But there also is no concerted effort to tie the disparate institutions of Jewish education together. Territorialism has prompted schools and institutions to fend for themselves rather than work together. Rabbis feel disenfranchised from the larger enterprise. And even the new initiatives of the federation tend to stress the individual institutions rather than a common good or coordination. It would seem that in Chicago traditional ways of doing Jewish education have been coupled with a culture of dissociation to produce a highly fragmented system. The system is not indifferent to the virtues of Jewish education, but it has failed to produce strong champions of the field, an appreciation for the value of coordination, and a vision for how to connect institutions and people to a whole Jewish educational enterprise greater than themselves.²²

Los Angeles

A recent article on Jewish education in Los Angeles referred to the “geographic and philosophical sprawl” of the local Jewish community and invidiously contrasted the community’s approach to the vision displayed by the Boston Jewish community and also the Chicago federation’s ambition to establish serious day school endowment funds.²³ These, it was argued, were models to be emulated. The top federation official in Los Angeles conceded his community’s failings: “I think we are at a very different level of community development. We are grappling here with trying to forge a vision that has broad-based consensus so we can move from our historical patterns of support to something that would address contemporary realities. . . . It’s taken a long time for Boston to get to this point, and the challenge in Los Angeles is longer term. But that doesn’t mean you don’t undertake it and don’t try to achieve it.”²⁴ Here in a nutshell are the great challenges in the country’s second-largest Jewish community: it serves a population scattered over vast distances; it has shallow roots and little history; it can boast no track record of significant Jewish fund-raising; and it has not developed coherence and unity of purpose.

The Los Angeles community consists primarily of newcomers whose families arrived in the period after World War II. Its major Jewish educational institutions—the University of Judaism, the Los Angeles branch of the Hebrew Union College, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Yeshiva University schools—were established in the postwar era, as were almost all of its day schools. Like many newer communities with a history of recent immigration, Los Angeles Jewry has low rates of affiliation and woefully low financial support.²⁵ With four hundred thousand more Jews than Chicago (or a population two and a half times as large as Chicago’s), the Los Angeles federation raises only slightly over half of what the JUF of Chicago brings in annually. Despite the substantial wealth of the community, it has produced few steady funders and champions of Jewish education (unless one counts the enormous sums raised by two major museums—the Museum of Tolerance and the Skirball Museum—both of which mainly direct their programming at non-Jews).

It is therefore all the more remarkable that Los Angeles boasts a strong network of Jewish day schools, many of which are housed at and sponsored by synagogues rather than run in a neutral, communal setting. Altogether, the thirty-six day schools in the area educate 9,600 students, accounting for about one-third of Jewish children. Los Angeles has also been described by one observer as “the liberal day school capital of America.” One of the largest day schools in the United States is run by the Stephen Wise Temple, a leading Reform congregation; its Milken High School alone enrolls eight hundred students. And there are additional day schools at other Reform temples in the area. The same is true of leading Conservative synagogues, which run large day schools. And then there are a range of communal day schools with a “liberal” orientation. Few locals doubt that the impetus for day school growth came primarily from developments outside the community:

desegregation, the poor quality of public schools, and the flourishing of a private school culture in the Los Angeles area prompted an interest in Jewish day schools, as much as anything else. (Fifteen percent of Jewish children in Greater Los Angeles attend a non-Jewish private school.) The choice for many parents is to decide which private school to select for their children—and thereby Jewish day schools have become an option, in fact, often a less expensive option.

In recent years, day school enrollments have been declining outside of the Orthodox sector. As the price of tuition continues to rise and public schools have improved, fewer children are being enrolled in lower schools; the expectation is that as the current bulge of high school students moves through the system, the overall number of day school enrollments will drop significantly. In fact, the five-year trend since 2000 has seen an annual drop of some 200 to 250 students in K–8 classes, a trend only slightly mitigated by increases of 100 students a year at the high school level.²⁶ The federation has done little to combat these trends. It does channel some \$2.25 million to day schools annually, but this amounts to a per capita level of support of about \$225 per day school child (less than half the allocation in Chicago). Given that annual budgets of the combined day schools stands at approximately \$116 million, the federation contribution plays a negligible role. (This is also true, of course, in New York, the community with the largest number of children enrolled in day schools.)

The majority of Jewish children receiving a Jewish education in the Los Angeles area attend congregational religious schools. Some thirteen thousand children are enrolled in sixty religious supplementary schools and another seven thousand in sixty-one early childhood education centers under Jewish auspices. (It is estimated that a quarter of local Jewish children never are exposed to any formal Jewish education.) These children receive only indirect communal support in the form of special programs run by the local Bureau of Jewish Education. In addition, programs for educators also help strengthen the supplementary and informal education spheres of local education.

The key arm in Los Angeles for dispensing funds and supporting the field of Jewish education is the Bureau of Jewish Education, an institution that gets high grades from most observers for accomplishing much with relatively sparse resources. The ratio of professional staff at the BJE to the number of students enrolled in schools under its purview is quite low.²⁷ Still, even with a small staff, the bureau has managed to develop and maintain an accreditation system with few parallels elsewhere. Using the power of the purse, it dispenses grants to congregational supplementary schools based on their number of students and the quantity of instructional hours the schools offer. It also has set a salary scale for teachers, a structure that educators appreciate. Using these levers, the BJE has coaxed schools to engage in self-evaluation and undergo a reaccreditation process every six years. Over the previous decade, seventy-five BJE-affiliated schools have engaged in such a self-study process.

The BJE also runs four principals' councils for early childhood directors, synagogue religious school principals, Orthodox yeshiva heads, and non-Orthodox day

school leaders. The bureau also runs consultations for teachers (including youth professionals) and administers special program grants—specifically, for Family Educators. Finally, the BJE works with foundations to raise funds for Jewish education.²⁸ Its most glaring weaknesses lie in its limited staff so that when particular problems arise in supplementary or day schools, the bureau cannot provide consultation, and in its inability to develop curricular resources. On the other hand, the bureau is the only agency in a highly diffuse community to have a sense of the larger system, but by its own admission it has succeeded only to a limited extent to coordinate the diverse programs of the system. Even in its capacity as the distributor of some \$3 million from the federation and foundations to Jewish educational institutions, it has not managed to develop the clout to play such a coordinating role.

Aside from the BJE, one of the key agencies to initiate new programs is the Jewish Community Fund. The \$480 million in the endowment fund is money primarily restricted by donors, but a bit over \$2 million a year may be allocated by the Community Fund to local organizations at the discretion of the fund's directors. The largest allocations have been set aside for the Israel Experience Program, designed to enable Jewish teens and college-aged adults to visit Israel (\$1.7 million), with smaller funds benefiting cultural programs.

Los Angeles has a range of other institutions that could contribute richly to its offerings in Jewish education, but remarkably few have made an impact. The Whizin Institute at the University of Judaism runs programs for Family Educators all over the country, but its expertise has not been tapped very much by local institutions. The same is true of the faculty at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at the Hebrew Union College, which engages in pioneering work in quite a few communities but is not utilized for an important role in local Jewish education. The Jewish Community Centers of Los Angeles have fallen on hard times and are not regarded as players. Camping programs run by the JCCs are not having an impact; the Ramah Camp of the Conservative movement and the Brandeis-Bardin Institute have done better. And more generally, informal education programs are not high on the list of priorities, although a new initiative of the BJE is trying to leverage the concern of high school students to beef up their college applications with evidence of service work, as a means to draw more teens into informal Jewish education—this in a community where barely 20 percent of teens engage in Jewish study.²⁹

Jewish education in Los Angeles is considerably more developed than one would guess from the small sums the community invests in the field. The inhospitable public school environment has helped to promote day school enrollment (although there is no assurance that this will continue at the same intensity in the future). The BJE has worked well with the federation to maximize its meager funding, and the community has invested strategically in a few programs.³⁰ None of this can offset the lack of serious funding for Jewish education in a community with pockets of great wealth. The head of the Jewish Community Fund put it well, if plaintively, when he asked rhetorically: "What kind of individual do you need to find [who] has the vision, the openness and the understanding . . . to put dollars

into a communal pot and understand that on every level, across the board, the community is enhanced by students being educated in a Jewish environment?" And one may add: what is needed for a community of such sophistication and size to begin to think systemically about Jewish education and take full advantage of its considerable assets so that its geographic sprawl does not have to lead necessarily to "philosophical sprawl?"

Philadelphia

In the closing months of the twentieth century, a hard-hitting report about the civic culture of Philadelphia was issued by the Pew Charitable Trusts, a local philanthropy.³¹ The report was sharply critical of the leadership in the city, decrying political and business elites as having a "second-class mentality," a "change phobia," and "a reflexive inferiority." "Here people don't set goals and get together on them," the report's author declared. "Here there seem to be no real believers and leaders and sources of initiative." A bank vice president was quoted as follows: "We just have never had a tradition here of business stepping forward and taking the lead on great civic matters." In conversation, it is evident that some local Jewish leaders share this critique: some speak of the flat and undistinguished skyline of the city as symbolic of the limited ambitions and self-effacing modesty of local Quaker culture. And they portray a Jewish community with few true leaders prepared to play an active civic role, let alone a leadership role in Jewish communal affairs.

It is not as if the Philadelphia Jewish community has no important history to draw on. On the contrary, as one of the first colonies with a Jewish community, Philadelphia numbers among the oldest Jewish communities in the country and has a synagogue that dates to the colonial era. Its historical role in Jewish educational initiatives is hardly to be dismissed. Rebecca Gratz established the Hebrew Sunday School Society of Philadelphia, which then was imitated by several other communities; the leadership of Philadelphia Jewry was instrumental in the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York; and one of its rabbis served as the first president of JTS. Gratz College was the country's first Jewish teachers college. And to the present day, the community boasts of having a rabbinical seminary, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and the presence of important Judaica professors at the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Gratz College, and other such places. The Jewish Renewal movement is housed in the community. Still, it is remarkable how limited is the impact of this community on the larger field of Jewish education and how starved the community is for funds and leadership.

The Philadelphia Jewish federation maintains itself on a shockingly low level of communal support. With a population of some 286,000 Jews to draw on, the federation raises only \$13.7 million dollars annually, which is \$3 million less than what the Atlanta Jewish community raises from one-third the number of Jews. A communal system so lacking in financial resources can hardly be expected to organize an effective educational effort. Its problems have now been compounded by

the rapid geographic dispersal of its population far from its important institutions and spread over an area that from end to end is eighty-six miles long. Not only is the federation badly underfinanced, but it also must address entirely new challenges to its delivery system created by mobility.

The strategy of the federation is to reverse its fortunes by developing a strong strategic plan that will galvanize supporters. Toward that end, its key planning staff and lay people have developed a detailed "Strategic Philanthropy Plan for Revitalization of the Greater Philadelphia Jewish Community." The plan calls for ambitious *future* initiatives to expand the circle of Jews of all ages who engage in Jewish study, especially among teens and adults. Planners are encouraged by their success in raising new funds once they sharpened the focus of an Israel Emergency campaign that had originally aimed to raise \$2 million but actually raised \$13 million. They are convinced that a clearer focus and articulation of strategic goals will increase the resources of the federation. Until the plan is implemented, though, it is impossible to judge how well it will succeed. But it is indicative of a serious effort by the federation to rethink the entire enterprise of Jewish education—and other communal goals—in Philadelphia.

The prime force for *current* initiatives in Philadelphia is the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, which operates as a beneficiary of the federation but also raises considerable funds through grantsmanship and other efforts. One community insider describes the past relationship between the federation and the CAJE as "low-grade warfare." It appears that this has eased somewhat as the central agency has successfully recruited influential board members and has established a track record of achievement. This happened, however, through a deliberate effort on the part of the central agency to raise serious money on its own and not rely solely on federation's allocation of slightly more than \$750,000.

The major focus of the central agency's attention is the supplementary school. The CAJE offers a teacher resource center; engages in teacher training and curriculum development; works on teacher recruitment, certification, and evaluation; and convenes principals and other educational leaders to partake in group councils. It also administers some programs, such as the Passport to Israel Scholarship Savings Program, and scholarship assistance.

In light of its limited resources and small staff, the CAJE has focused its energies on working with roughly 1,000 local teachers (893 who teach in supplementary schools and 108 who work as Jewish studies teachers in local day schools).³² The Auerbach CAJE has invested itself in tracking enrollment trends in its schools, and part of its motivation has been to demonstrate that supplementary schools are underserved, given the large majority of Jewish children they enroll. The central agency, in short, has embraced the supplementary school as its primary constituent.

One of its important initiatives is called NESS, Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools. Mainly directed at school directors, the project aims to help them develop a school environment that will be "engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable,"

and specifically one that encourages young people to continue their Jewish education beyond the bar/bat mitzvah years.³³ The 1.5 million-dollar project is jointly funded by the federation, private donors and foundations, and a nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance to schools, school districts, and other educational and community organizations. CAJE eventually plans to share its findings with other Jewish communities. If things go as planned, the Auerbach CAJE with its tiny resources hopes to make not only a local impact but also to teach other communities. On another front, the CAJE is also working on teacher recruitment in a field that is finding it ever more difficult to recruit the necessary trained personnel. Again, these are ambitious efforts for a small, poorly funded enterprise, and they serve as a model of how much can be accomplished with ambitious and energetic educational leadership.

Another important resource in Philadelphia is its network of day schools. Between 1946 and 1980, seven schools were established in the community and two more have been added since then, as well as extra campuses for existing schools. (About 15 percent of Jewish children enrolled in local Jewish schooling attend a day school.) The largest of these is the Perelman School, a member of the Solomon Schechter network of Conservative day schools, which enrolls more than 650 children on its four campuses.³⁴ Akiba, a transdenominational school founded in 1946, is the community high school. Unfortunately, the natural complementarity of the Schechter school, which had been K–8, and Akiba, which was a high school, has exploded into feuding and rivalry once Akiba opened a middle school to compete directly with the Perelman School. The schools are now engaged in a tuition war to undercut each other, and the Perelman School is threatening to open its own high school. To the dismay of many—and the delight of the local press—all this infighting is taking place with little or no federation mediation. Meanwhile, both schools are experiencing a decline in enrollments.

Philadelphia has the usual complement of congregational preschools and lower schools but also still maintains a small communal system of supplementary education. Elementary schools in this communal network are suffering from an ongoing decline, with 2003–4 enrollments perhaps only one-quarter what they had been six years earlier. By contrast, the Jewish Community High School, sponsored by Gratz College, continues to attract more than 750 students. One of the unusual challenges faced by Jewish early childhood programs is competition from Quaker Friends schools. Such schools are so desired by many Jewish parents that they enroll their children even in preschool programs at the Friends schools in order to reserve a spot for them in the lower school. Thus an important, potential portal into the Jewish community is closed to an unusual number of young Jewish families.

Gratz College, as I have noted, is a school with a century of history; unfortunately, as it looks to the future, Gratz is also a school in search of a mission. At one time, Gratz effectively served as the bureau of Jewish education in Philadelphia, but was stripped of that role when the Auerbach CAJE was founded in the late 1980s. Its most successful program is its community high school, and in fact Gratz

is consulting with other communities and helping them develop a similar model. Gratz also runs a small cantorial school, but most of its students are preparing for work in the field of Jewish education: some are graduate students who seek positions in day schools, family education, or educational administration; others are teachers who want credentials; and still others come from outside of Philadelphia for an M.A. in Jewish studies. Unlike some other Jewish teachers colleges, however, Gratz receives insufficient federation funding to keep its tuition low, and that has cut into its enrollments.

It is instructive to view the Philadelphia story within a comparative framework. It is, after all, a community with energetic leadership in its central agency, and it boasts a range of institutions of Jewish higher learning and a network of synagogue and supplementary schools. But it is also a community acutely self-conscious of its limitations. Gratz may have a long history, but its future viability is unclear. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College seems to evince no interest in Jewish education at all. And the federation is severely constrained by its limited resources and its acute awareness that the Jewish community it serves is dispersing ever further from central institutions. Rabbis are neither involved in educational efforts beyond their own congregations, nor do they seem to be engaged by the federation in its work. Where once Har Zion Congregation, a Conservative synagogue, viewed itself as a guardian of Jewish education throughout the community—and acted accordingly by founding and funding various schools—it no longer plays such a role, and no other congregation has replaced it. Given the size of its Jewish population and proud history, the Philadelphia Jewish community should be a leader in the field of Jewish education; instead, it is struggling to make ends meet.

Saint Louis

The smallest of the communities under study, the Saint Louis Jewish population numbers only some 67,000 souls. Were this population cohesive and clear about its communal priorities, it could potentially serve as a model community. Saint Louis, after all, can boast of a set of institutions within close proximity of one another. It is relatively easy for a visitor to travel over a five-mile radius, spending time at the JCC campus (which also houses a home for seniors and key communal offices), and then move on to visit a range of synagogues and also the campuses of day schools. The relatively compact geographic layout of the community, however, belies its fragmentation. To begin with, the Jewish population has been dispersing and lives at an ever greater remove from the central institutional structures. According to one estimate, three-quarters of the Jewish population now lives to the west of the important institutional campuses. Moreover, the community is not well integrated and is fractured along denominational lines.

The Jewish population of Saint Louis is overwhelmingly Reform (some 70 percent). For much of the twentieth century, classical Reform held sway, and only recently have temples hired rabbis who are leading them to a different conception

of Reform. About half the children receiving a Jewish education in Reform temples attend just once-a-week Sunday school programs, a minimal exposure to Jewish content. The rest attend Hebrew school, which meets twice weekly. Early in the twenty-first century, a new day school opened under Reform auspices, and it is generating some excitement because of its innovativeness in a community where Reform Jews, particularly, “feel guilty” about not sending their children to public school. Supporters of Jewish education are hoping that a successful Reform day school will change the attitudes of key federation leaders, who tend to be unsympathetic to such schools and regard them as mainly of concern to the Orthodox.

The Conservative community is in demographic decline: its synagogues are losing members, and its congregational school enrollments are plummeting. In recent years, two of the three local synagogues entered into merger talks. (When news of the talks filtered out, the conversation came to a halt.) Even before these discussions, the synagogues already had combined their supplementary school programs. The Conservative population is eroding mainly among its younger populations, with those who remain in Saint Louis opting to join Reform temples and the more committed to Conservative Judaism moving away. In addition to its congregations, the Conservative community revolves around the local Solomon Schechter day school. Indeed, some adults claim they send their children to the Schechter school so that they can partake of the “surrogate community” created by the parent body. There is no day high school option in the city outside of Orthodox schools, but in truth, the middle school of Schechter suffers a significant drop-off of students whose parents rush to place them in the “right” public and private schools that will then lead to the “right” high schools. In other words, the drop-out process already begins after grade 5.

The community also has a small Orthodox community, consisting of both modern and Haredi types. Their lives revolve particularly around a modern Orthodox day school and two Haredi schools, as well as synagogues that are closely networked to these day schools. It does not appear that Orthodox Jews are especially connected to the larger Jewish community, although school principals and rabbis may make an appearance at federation or BJE-sponsored events. After all, they do get some limited funding from these institutions. But the Orthodox community seems largely in a defensive posture. It is small and unable to attract more members from other communities. In fact, quite a few Orthodox families send their high school children away from Saint Louis to acquire a Jewish education in communities as distant as Baltimore and Milwaukee.

Educational efforts in the community are also shaped by a set of deeply rooted historical perspectives. To begin with, the community long was lead by people who regarded decentralization as the ideal way to address educational matters. “The Reform old guard,” writes one historian, “felt that religious education was the decentralized province of each congregation, whether Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox. East European tradition put that responsibility in the community at large—a *kehilla* perhaps—through a centralized educational structure.”³⁵ The older

perspective has been hard to overcome, and the community was late to establish a central agency for Jewish education. Even more seriously, Saint Louis Jewry suffers from its own “poor self-image.” Long accustomed to viewing themselves as a Jewish backwater and comparing themselves invidiously to Chicago Jewry, communal leaders have little confidence that they can attract strong educational leaders to town. Some key figures in the field of communal and educational leadership are convinced that at best Saint Louis lags five years behind the rest of the American Jewish community.

Morale is not improved by the flat campaign of the federation over the past decade. In fact, the annual campaign took in the same amount of dollars in 2003 as it did in 1995, which means that with the rise in the cost of living, considerably less money is available. Unlike many other communities, the Saint Louis federation cannot draw on funds from a separate Community Fund because foundation funds are kept in-house. Federation leaders talk of their philanthropic base as giving little priority to Jewish causes; under the circumstances, they view it as an achievement that 20 percent of local allocations go to the central agency for Jewish education. With an ever growing population of intermarried families who are accepted without question in the community, it is unsurprising that Jewish education is a low priority. The community strives to maintain a connection with the Jewish population, but is not particularly interested in educating them—or in raising uncomfortable questions. In the late 1990s, the federation developed a priority plan: social justice and support of the elderly were deemed the two highest goals, with Jewish education coming in a distant third. Matters are not helped by the fact that strong opponents of day schools serve on the executive committee of the federation.

Still, the federation does offer day school assistance through a need-based formula. In years past, the system of allocation was based on the average enrollment of schools, a system that favored the older Orthodox schools and certainly did not benefit new ones. Then the system was altered to a needs-based formula, with families receiving as much as \$1,000 per year for up to two children, based on financial need. Some 70 percent of federation funding for day schools goes to this aid program, with the rest earmarked for bloc grants if schools apply for them.

To the extent that there is any institution or group of people in Saint Louis concerned about the Jewish educational system, the CAJE is the central address. In recent years, the CAJE has been able to attract board members who have some wider credibility in the community, and it has acted as the local convener in the area of Jewish education. The CAJE brings together day school teachers and school administrators; it provides for adult Jewish education (the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School program) and administers Israel trips, teen programs, and especially Jewish Family Education. A local historian has given the CAJE high marks for addressing “‘turf protection,’ personality clashes, and curricular and administrative disorganization.”³⁶

One of the more unusual efforts of the CAJE has been its role in creating two separate task forces, one on Conservative Jewish education, and one on Reform

Jewish education. In the case of the former, the CAJE was instrumental in bringing about a “collaborative and integrated Conservative Hebrew and Religious schools system.”³⁷ It helped congregations coordinate and consolidate their offerings. The Reform commission focused instead on credentialing and raising the quality of teaching and recruiting new people for congregational schools. The CAJE developed a system to offer professional excellence grants to schools.³⁸

The larger CAJE agenda, then, is to improve the quality of supplementary school education in the community. It works intensively with school principals and trains family educators. It also offers a supplementary high school program in conjunction with the Conservative synagogues. There is much to admire in the tenacious efforts of the CAJE to strengthen local Jewish education. But there is no gainsaying that it is up against tough odds. According to its own planning report, only one-tenth of Jewish teens in grades 8–12 are involved in either Jewish youth groups or in formal Jewish education.³⁹ It works with a federation leadership that has other priorities. And the general spirit of educational decentralization still pervades the community.

To the outside visitor, those concerned with Jewish education in Saint Louis appear to be engaged in an uphill battle. The JCC is almost without an impact in this arena, especially because more than one-third of its members are not Jewish. High rates of intermarriage militate against developing strong educational programs. The federation does not regard Jewish education as a high priority. And the denominations and their schools go their own way, even as all appear to be weakening. It may be worth studying whether this state of affairs characterizes many other smaller- to intermediate-size communities or is the outcome of idiosyncratic local circumstances. But the challenges facing those engaged with Jewish education in Saint Louis are certainly colored by the realities of demographic decline, severe shortages in financial resources, and institutional fragmentation.

San Francisco

The Jewish population of the San Francisco Bay area has grown dramatically over the past two decades, largely through the migration to Silicon Valley and its environs of newcomers from all across the country and also from Israel. According to the latest demographic survey, the Greater Bay Area Jewish population now numbers in the neighborhood of five hundred thousand—about a hundred thousand fewer than in Los Angeles. These newcomers have catapulted the Bay Area into the ranks of the largest half-dozen concentrations of Jews in the country. Moreover, despite the wide geographic dispersal of these Jews, some of the inner suburbs closer to San Francisco now have fairly dense concentrations of Jews, thereby making institutional life more feasible.⁴⁰

This new demographic reality was but one aspect of a significant makeover of the Bay Area Jewish community. On most measures the community had lagged far behind others of a comparable size and indeed was a Jewish backwater. It had a lay

leadership with generally low levels of Judaic knowledge, who seemed more concerned about social acceptance than serious Jewish living; it was widely dispersed with no area of particular population concentration; it lacked a college of Jewish studies or other program to train educators; and its educational programming was tepid. Perhaps what distinguished the community most was its sense of itself as “Jewishly unique.” Not surprisingly, it attracted unconventional rabbinic leadership: its Conservative rabbis tended to be among the most liberal in the country (one made a name for himself as a student of Buddhism), and two of the three largest Reform temples hired women as their senior rabbis, enabling them to break the “glass ceiling” that still obstructs female rabbis in other parts of the country. But Jewish education was not an area of communal attention—until recently.

The character of this Jewish community closely approximates the style of the larger Bay Area. Jews in this part of Northern California tend to be liberal, diverse, and experimental in temperament, with family configurations that do not conform to any single model: the population encompasses large numbers of young singles who have sought their fortune in the rush to Silicon Valley, a relatively high percentage of intermarried Jews, same-gender families, couples where spouses are of disparate ages, interracial families, and the like. Only 22 percent of Bay Area Jews claim to be affiliated with a synagogue, an unusually low level. Jewish educators are acutely conscious of the particular challenges that arise from these circumstances. Family educators especially report tensions rising to the surface that are traceable to the heterogeneous nature of the parent population.

The community, moreover, consists of a goodly number of free spirits who lack a sense of rootedness in the area and do not feel obligated to conduct business as usual as understood by the established community. The new arrivals, after all, were drawn to the region by its innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, and the high-risk and high-stakes world that characterizes the new technological frontier of Silicon Valley. Not surprisingly, they bring the same disposition to the work of Jewish education. They talk about “strategic investments” in philanthropy and envision their giving as a form of “venture philanthropy.” These predilections translate into a new style of giving, one that is impatient with the federation bureaucracy and is unwilling to live with long-standing constraints.

As a consequence there is a sharp divergence between the federation leadership and the new class of philanthropists. The former have displayed little consistent interest in Jewish education and in the view of many insiders seem to have no clear sense of priorities at all. It appears that the federation has not engaged in a priority-setting process in more than a decade. Living for quite a few years with flat campaigns and under enormous pressure from social service agencies not to alter allocations, federation leaders have virtually no new resources to commit to the field. The only source of new revenue is the \$750 million endowment fund, but it consists mainly of restricted monies and the assets of supporting foundations whose interests lie outside the Jewish community. Still, the chief executive of the endowment fund can and does advise donors and has brought some new unrestricted funding

into the education arena, including capital grants to most day schools in the area. Not surprisingly, this officer is widely regarded as the most powerful force in the community by virtue of her access to new money.

Given this vacuum, donors, in the words of one informant, “are driving decisions in Jewish education like never before.” Several contributors have become staunch champions of Jewish education—and ignore or work around the federation to make things happen. They have forged ahead to create new institutions and programs, despite the lack of interest of the federation.

The founding of new day schools is the most overt expression of this new philanthropic spirit. Over the past six to eight years, two new communal day high schools and a several new lower schools have been established, many with sparkling new facilities.⁴¹ In contrast to the day schools of Los Angeles, Bay Area day schools are predominantly nondenominational. Because the Orthodox population in the region is small, day schools are also not heavily influenced by Orthodox Jews. The day schools, however, are not strongly religious in their mission; rather, they focus on Jewish culture and Hebrew language (perhaps the sizable Israeli parent body plays a role in this regard). Many of these schools also offer some restricted Jewish studies fare, an unusually sparse number of hours devoted to Judaic study. The schools are also particularly preoccupied with the social challenges raised by the high number of interfaith families in the parent body.

When asked to explain how interest in day school education developed in the community, participants cite the influence of outsiders rather than developments internal to the Bay Area Jewish community. One frequently cited inspiration was the Wexner Heritage Program that created a network of people, usually parents of young children, who were galvanized by the program to build more intensive institutions of Jewish education. Despite the high quality of public schools in Silicon Valley, parents informed themselves about the strengths of Jewish day schools. The second external support credited by school founders was the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), which aided inexperienced lay people to launch new school efforts. This is not to say that internal resources were entirely lacking: the presence in the area of Israeli families had a profound impact on the thinking of school founders. (In fact, some networks of families soon began to vacation together in Israel during the summers.) Key Jewish studies professors at Stanford University offered know-how and Jewish perspectives. And then there was an unexpected development: to the surprise of many, the adult children of federation leaders who themselves were not particularly interested in Jewish education and more concerned with social acceptance, began to evince a strong desire to engage more actively in Jewish life. Day schools became their vehicle for such engagement. And as one observer put it, federation leaders who had been anti-day school because they had feared charges of dual loyalty and parochialism are now watching in amazement as their grandchildren, nephews, and nieces enroll in day schools.

Family foundations, some representing old-guard families and others established with new money generated during the boom years of the 1990s, have helped fund

several additional new initiatives. These include an ambitious program costing \$1.5 million to train teen workers; a scholarship fund that assists more than two hundred children each year to attend an overnight camp under Jewish auspices; a voucher program enabling families to afford tuition at the Kehilla Jewish High School;⁴² and a newly established consortium for day schools designed to provide marketing and recruitment advice. In each instance, a family foundation was enlisted to help support the new program. Like a good many programs with such funding, these initiatives were subject to the whims of the supporting foundations, which are notorious for their “short attention spans”—that is, their interest in the quick fix. The re-funding of initiatives depended less on their actual success than on the subjective decision of the foundation about whether it was interested in something new and ready to move on. In short, the advantage of venture philanthropy is that it is bold and acts decisively; the disadvantage is that foundations tend to be unreliable long-term partners because they like to move on to new ventures and have no compunction about abandoning successful programs. The further challenge posed by a system heavily supported by foundations is that however much a central planning agency such as the federation identifies a need, there is no assurance that foundations will decide to address that need. In San Francisco, for example, the community foundation was determined to create a community-wide day school fund based on the Chicago model, but the lead family foundation they approached preferred a teen program.

The Bureau of Jewish Education serves as an important partner of the federation and family foundations. Indeed, whereas most federation funding for Jewish education has declined over the past five or six years, allocations and grants to the BJE have risen significantly in the same period. Its flagship operation is a family education center that produces material employed in other communities around the country. It also has served as a collaborator on Israel educational initiatives, including a program to bring educators to Israel. And it has been a partner in developing teen programs. But primarily, the BJE has served as a coordinating agency and an institution that builds educators rather than works with individual schools.

Perhaps, the most striking feature of Jewish education in the Bay Area is the extent to which innovation has been spurred from the bottom up. It is not that the federation and the bureau are unimportant participants; rather, the energy and money flow from networks of people outside the official organizations. After the success of the first Wexner Heritage Program, local individuals took the initiative to found a second group. Much of the energy for establishing new day schools derived from these groups; and, in turn, the parents drawn to the day schools have created their own community—often independent of synagogues—to engage in other forms of Jewish service.⁴³ Funding too is driven by individuals outside the system with a division of labor whereby donors serve as the spark, and staff members at the Endowment Fund or the BJE staff the new initiatives. The community still lacks a coherent plan for Jewish education. “No one is thinking about the big picture of Jewish education in the Bay Area,” flatly declares a leading foundation person

who has funded some initiatives. But considering its undistinguished history in the arena of Jewish education, the Bay Area can point to important successes initiated by a new generation of activists and champions of Jewish education who have powered and financed change, despite the virtual indifference of the official communal leadership.

One Size Does Not Fit All

This Cook's tour of seven communities highlights the extent to which Jewish educational arrangements vary greatly by community. To begin with, historical and cultural circumstances have conditioned a particular set of predispositions. The culture of the Midwest exerts a powerful grip on Chicago Jewry that seems to impede educational innovation. The self-effacing Quaker culture of Philadelphia retards the emergence of flamboyant and exciting new leadership. And the inferiority complex of Saint Louis Jewry does not encourage more forward-looking approaches. By contrast, the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurial derring-do of Atlanta and San Francisco have produced innovation and a sense of forward movement. But to focus exclusively on the heavy hand of history is to simplify matters too much. It is not as if Atlanta and San Francisco have Jewish communities with no history. And Los Angeles, which is in some ways the youngest of the communities under study because so much of its infrastructure and Jewish population date to the post-World War II era, is hardly the most progressive community, despite its relative youth.

Perhaps, then, the crucial variable is the recency of a large population influx. In communities such as Atlanta and San Francisco, which have attracted proportionately large groups of newcomers since the 1990s, it may be that the size of the migrant groups relative to the older population has been sufficient to remake or at least challenge the local Jewish culture: between the boomtown atmosphere pervading those communities and the energy of key communal leaders, innovation has trumped the tried-and-true. It is harder to remake long-entrenched systems, as we have seen in communities such as Philadelphia and Chicago, where historical ways of conducting business constrain change and the newcomers are integrated into the existing system. And yet, the experience of Boston also illustrates that a community with older cultural traditions can gradually remake itself—provided that it builds *and sustains* a well-developed process of change, has strong federation leadership favoring change, is open to new ideas, and can enlist a cadre of talented educators who are prepared to innovate. The weight of history and local culture, then, makes itself felt but is not necessarily immovable if other forces coalesce. Those forces can be galvanized by an influx of new populations who are not wedded to the old ways of conducting business; they can take the form of new ideas and new money; they can derive from a leadership intent on breaking with entrenched ways.

Size counts too. In the larger communities of Los Angeles and Chicago, the sheer number of institutions and the wide geographic dispersal militate against

change. Undoubtedly, in both communities local culture plays a role as well. In Los Angeles, high rates of nonaffiliation and relatively low rates of philanthropic giving deter action, even in a community that prides itself on its cutting-edge nonconformism. In Chicago, the stolid midwestern traditionalism seems to weigh heavily on the community, stifling efforts to innovate. But beyond these considerations, one senses that when the population is so large and so widely dispersed, leaders are frustrated by an inability to get their hands around the far-flung institutions.

One additional aspect of local culture with a bearing on these matters is the “culture of giving” that has developed in each community. I have noted, for example, the extent to which new forms of “entrepreneurial philanthropy,” volunteering, and civic engagement in the area around Silicon Valley contrast sharply with the “loosely connected” civic culture of Philadelphia, which partially accounts for the relative low levels of giving by Jews in the city of Brotherly Love. The efficiency of fund-raising in Chicago (and other midwestern cities) stands in marked contrast to the relatively low levels of giving in Los Angeles, a comparison made all the more dramatic by the relative size of each community. Despite its vast numerical advantage and the deep pockets within the Jewish community of Los Angeles, philanthropic support for the local federation in that community is dwarfed by the fund-raising prowess of Chicago. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the overall patterns of giving in each metropolitan area are mirrored by their Jewish communities.

But there is a second implication to the comparison of Los Angeles with Chicago, and that concerns broader cultural outlooks. The stolid midwestern adherence to tradition has also enabled the Chicago community to develop in a stable fashion; in Los Angeles, the relative newness of the population and the low levels of affiliation also affect attitudes toward investment in the local community. As Robert Putnam has observed, just as a repotted plant needs time to root itself in new soil, so too transient populations require time to establish roots in their communities, and hence are less likely to invest through giving and volunteering.⁴⁴ But there is a limit to how far this analysis can explain patterns of involvement. It is noteworthy, for example, that the newer arrivals in the Bay Area are far more energetic and engaged in educational investment than are the old families. Saint Louis is also a midwestern community with multigenerational families, but it achieves only low sums of funding. Clearly other variables are at work. Young families in the Bay Area have demonstrated a strong interest in developing fine day schools for their own children; they are remaking local Jewish education not through a concerted plan along the lines of Boston but rather by building the system from the bottom up, school by school, program by program, for the benefit of their own children. The Saint Louis community also shows some strength in the range of its day schools. But neither community can be described as having a strong Jewish educational system.

The types of commitment to Jewish life deeply affect the way a community addresses Jewish education. The predominantly Reform community of Saint Louis, with its roots in classical Reform, seems for the most part unmoved by the needs of the Jewish education. By contrast, in other communities, such as San Francisco and

Boston, Reform Jews are more likely to be active in support of Jewish education. It appears that certain interventions have swung people in a more positive direction. In the Bay Area, the role of the Wexner Heritage Program was widely cited as making a big difference; in Boston, the Meah program also has influenced some key champions of Jewish education. The effectiveness of Orthodox Jews and engaged Conservative Jews also makes a difference. Chicago Orthodoxy, for all its insularity, nonetheless shapes the crucial institutions of Jewish education and runs its own central agency. Similarly, Conservative Jews in Chicago, for all their weaknesses and lack of coordination in other areas, have succeeded in creating some strong day schools and an influential Ramah camp. The role of the Atlanta Kollel also illustrates the extent to which an assertive and outgoing Orthodoxy can shape the larger communal discourse. Denominational patterns, in short, vary by community and are shaping influences.

And then there are the serendipitous factors, usually related to the influence of a few critical people who happen to take a strong interest in Jewish education. Much of the educational commitment of the Marcus JCC in Atlanta is attributed to the forceful dedication of its chief executive and the staff he has assembled. In other communities, JCCs are regarded as marginal because they exert no influence and make no serious effort to move the population to greater engagement with Jewish education. Yet here too the story is complicated by local values and traditions. In several communities, key federation leaders who wanted to invest more resources in Jewish education were thwarted by advocates of the social service agencies; they could not move the system, despite their best intentions. It is therefore not only a matter of having the right person in place who makes Jewish education a priority, but that individual also must work within a communal support system receptive to educational investment.

Beyond historical and cultural patterns and also communal priorities, this survey of seven communities also highlights the vast differences in the types of educational programs that are supported and encouraged. In most communities, day schools receive the lion's share of funds for Jewish education, whereas congregational schools benefit from virtually no communal assistance. A number of the central agencies I have encountered deliberately understand their mission as one of aiding congregational schools, because the latter are treated as stepchildren by the federation. This certainly is the explicit agenda of central agencies in Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Boston. Some of these bureaus will admit that they are not set up to aid day schools because the community never gave them the resources to reach into day schools in a serious fashion. Others will justify their investment in congregational schools by noting that for too long such schools were left to their own devices, even though they continue to educate the majority of Jewish children.

There are also differences in the way communities address informal Jewish education. Some invest heavily in preschool programs, while others promote adult education; and some focus on both areas, regarding preschool children and their families as the best investment for educational outreach. When it comes to pro-

grams for the post-bar and bat mitzvah set, some communities invest most heavily in Israel trips for teens, whereas others have worked to bolster youth programming or summer camp opportunities. Few communities consistently invest in all three options. Indeed, the way in which communities channel resources to the range of informal educational programs and the type of program each favors most are among the distinctive features of the various cultures of Jewish education I have studied.⁴⁵

To conclude this comparison of the differences among these communal cultures, a word is in order about what remains to be studied. We need to know more about the cluster of circumstances that make for higher rates of day school participation in a few communities as compared with others. Relatively high rates of day school attendance in Los Angeles, for example, are often explained as a consequence of the poor public school systems; and in most localities, desegregation of schools and busing of children are identified as the historical catalysts prompting parents to send their children to day schools. It would be worthwhile to learn how internal Jewish factors—adult education programs, charismatic leaders, networks of parents—drew more people to day school enrollment. In San Francisco, those internal factors are cited as far more important, because public schools in many neighborhoods of the Bay Area are of high quality, and parents nonetheless have opted for day schools. Similarly, more work needs to be done to explain why in some communities supplementary high school participation has increased dramatically. Certainly, some programs have refashioned their curricula and have worked with congregations, as is the case with the Prozdor program in Boston. But we need to learn more about how the post-bar/bar mitzvah dropout syndrome has been reversed in some communities. Finally, the relative success of some communities in enrolling a higher percentage of children in Jewish education in comparison with other places warrants attention. Why are the percentages of children between the ages of three and seventeen who receive a Jewish education different from one community to the next?

What These Communities Have in Common

Despite the varied approaches of communities to Jewish education and the idiosyncratic structures they have created to address the needs of the field, a visitor to these seven localities cannot but be struck by the common challenges they face. In community after community, certain challenges recur.

THE EVER WIDENING DISPERSAL OF JEWISH POPULATIONS STRESSES THE SYSTEM In every community under study, one of the first issues raised by federation leaders and educators is the new challenge arising from the wide geographic dispersal of Jews. In most communities, federation leaders literally talk in terms of square miles within their catchment areas or the furthest distance between Jews

residing in their communities. All federations are grappling with the challenge of how to deliver services as Jews live at an ever greater remove from the key institutions, especially from schools. Some talk of establishing satellite schools; others think in terms of constructing new buildings—JCCs, schools, synagogues—in those areas. The well-documented phenomenon of Jewish geographic mobility is placing great stress on central institutions and those responsible for planning and coordinating the delivery of services.

THE RELATIVELY FLAT ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS OF FEDERATIONS OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS ARE TAKING THEIR TOLL With quite a few federations unable raise even enough money to keep up with the rising cost of living, planners are forced to make tough decisions about funding cuts. In Atlanta, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Saint Louis, Jewish educational programs experienced a drop in federation support from 2002 to 2003; in several communities in this sample, central agencies have been receiving lower allocations compared with just a few years before. Some of these declines are attributable to fluctuation in grants and other forms of special funding, but the challenge of keeping up allocations when revenues are declining is having an impact on funding for Jewish education. Day school scholarship money has also declined in a number of communities. Most federation officials note matter-of-factly that their annual revenues are fully earmarked even before campaign money has been raised; the only opportunity for new funding comes from foundation grants or from interest thrown off by unrestricted funds in the communal endowment fund. Not surprisingly, given these circumstances, the Bay Area witnessed the emergence of new day schools almost entirely through the largess of private donors, and with little help from the federation. When new philanthropy is forthcoming in communities, it is generally directed to capital projects, not new educational programs. The weakening of centralized campaigns severely constrains new educational programming, and although in some communities, champions of Jewish education are stepping forward, they are relatively few in number.

THERE IS A DEARTH OF CHAMPIONS WHO FIGHT FOR THE NEEDS OF THE FIELD Most, though not all, of the communities under study can boast a few philanthropists who have invested in Jewish education. In Boston, there are the donors to the \$45 million fund for “peerless excellence” and the Gann family, the supporters of the New Jewish High School; in San Francisco, the Lent, Lauder, and Bernstein families have made a major difference to individual day schools; in Los Angeles, the Milkens helped fund a huge day high school and the Lainer family has invested in creating new schools; in Philadelphia, the Perelman and Kimmel families have made their mark on two day schools; and so too the Crown family in Chicago. As this listing demonstrates, the most popular causes for those who are significant donors to Jewish education—and the largest gifts to Jewish education—have gone to day schools. In each of these communities, lesser sums fund

innovative programs, for example, those to train teen educators in the Bay Area, to provide scholarships for summer camping, or to enable teens to go on a trip to Israel. It appears that the lowest priority of contributors is support for educators in the form of in-service training for teachers, Israel trips for educators, and the development of new curricula. And insofar as such funds are even made available, they are in the form of grants that, more often than not, are nonrenewable—not because the program has failed but because the attention span of the donor has drifted to something more “innovative” and “cutting edge.”

FEDERATION LEADERS GENERALLY DO NOT PLACE HIGH PRIORITY ON JEWISH EDUCATION Typically, lay leaders who rise in the federation world identify most strongly either with support for local social service agencies or with projects related to Israel. As a result, education generally comes in a distant third in the rankings of priorities of federations. A recent strategic planning study conducted by the MetroWest (West Orange) New Jersey federation (not one of the seven communities under study here) illustrates the problem.⁴⁶ When the federation’s trustees were polled on their own strategic priorities for the federation, the top three items they chose were supporting Israel and the diaspora, enhancing identity and continuity, and reprioritizing Jewish education. By comparison, they concluded that the community itself ranked supporting Israel and the diaspora the highest, and then caring for an aging population, followed by financing Jewish human services as the top three items. The gap between what leaders individually believed was of highest priority and what the community *actually* supported was greatest in the area of caring for the aged and investing in Jewish education. (The former was given significantly greater priority than the latter.) Entrenched allocations priorities seem to trump the perceptions of leaders as to what is really of greater importance.

More generally, social service advocates continue to outmaneuver champions of Jewish education. In a few of the communities under study, professionals at central agencies self-consciously are working to cultivate up-and-coming leaders in the hope that they will move from serving on the board of the central agency to key federation positions, and in the process will transform discussions so as to reflect the actual needs of young people. That shift is coming slowly, but in the meanwhile, Jewish education has not risen as a priority.

CENTRAL AGENCIES ARE NOT EQUIPPED WITH THE RESOURCES AND AUTHORITY TO PLAY A LARGER ROLE In the course of the interviews, leading staff members of the central agencies proved themselves the most knowledgeable and best connected when it comes to matters of local Jewish education. Unfortunately, these officials are generally in no position to act on their knowledge. Bureaus have come in for hard times over the past fifteen years. Quite a few have been disbanded and then reorganized; most are under enormous pressure to do more with less. Bureaus are in the impossible situation of dependence on federations for funding, but are given inadequate resources to do their work. They cannot have

a serious impact on day schools, which has driven bureaus to devote most their energy to working with supplementary schools. Because this field too is highly diffuse, the central agencies limit their work in general to in-service training for educators, especially school directors. But this type of work is poorly understood by noneducators and underappreciated.

The strength of central agencies is precisely that they are perched at the center and therefore have a wider grasp of the educational configuration in the community. Central agencies might be the logical coordinators of local education. But since they are largely if not entirely dependent on federations for their funding, they have little authority—except if the federation cedes such authority. But why would a federation do so? And so, the central agency is unable to play a decisive role. Its staff members have the expertise, but not the authority, resources, or control to bring the community together to address educational needs.

COMMUNITIES HAVE NOT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THE KEY PLAYERS IN JEWISH EDUCATION OR THEIR ROLES In each of the seven communities, a mix of educators, communal professionals, and volunteer leaders were asked to identify the pivotal local actors in the field of Jewish education. Whereas most people interviewed spoke mainly about the part of the Jewish education elephant that they themselves touched, bureau people had a greater sense of the whole. In some communities, federation planners were knowledgeable and appeared to care about the state of the field. And then, of course, there were the academics who worked in some communities on Jewish education, as well as some heads of specific programs. Only in a few communities, such as Boston and Philadelphia, did it appear that a few lay leaders were well informed about the whole.

More surprising were the individuals and institutions omitted when I asked about the prime players. Most glaring was the paucity of references to rabbis. True, rabbis work within their own congregations to better Jewish education. But rarely were congregational rabbis perceived as champions of Jewish education or as forceful advocates for it within the broader community. One would have expected rabbis to serve as proponents of Jewish education and as knowledgeable advocates. They seem not to play a strong role in communal conversation about priorities. Why this is the case is a subject deserving of further inquiry: is it that rabbis are not versed in how to negotiate their way through the communal maze? Is it that they are too preoccupied with running their own institutions? Or is it that federations and communal agencies have not been receptive to rabbinic participation in the planning process?

Also striking was the lack of importance attributed to denominational organizations. One congregational rabbi of a Reform temple claimed that until recently fewer than 10 percent of Reform congregations bothered to use curricular materials produced by the Education Department of the Union for Reform Judaism, a situation that only in the past few years had improved. In Conservative synagogues there was little talk about the support and materials offered by the Education De-

partment of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Insofar as national organizations were mentioned at all, PEJE was cited as a great help for some fledgling schools, as were loans provided by the Avi Chai Foundation.⁴⁷ The curricula and classes offered by national programs in the field of adult education received high grades. Particularly influential was the Wexner Heritage Program, often described as transformative. The Melton Adult Mini-Schools came in for accolades, as did the Meah program in Boston. (Surprisingly, the consulting work of the Jewish Education Services of North America did not come up in interviews, nor did the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education, perhaps because the latter mainly works with teachers, who were not interview subjects, and the former because JESNA consults with small groups within communities.)

All of this points up the extent to which communities rely on their own local talent, curricular planners, bureau staff members, and educators to make Jewish education happen. Jewish education remains largely a local phenomenon. The sobering question is whether it is particularly good for Jewish education that each community, and more often than not, each school, reinvents the wheel anew. Presumably, all these institutions and communities are engaged in the same process to provide a Jewish education, but the weakness of most of the national agencies and the absence of new ones poised to make a national impact suggests that there is no common national Jewish culture or vision furthering Jewish education.

Building a Network of Jewish Education in Local Communities

The great historian of American education, Lawrence Cremin, urged his colleagues to think beyond the role of individual institutions to consider “educational configurations.” By this he meant that “each of the institutions within a given configuration interacts with the others and with the larger society that sustains it and that in turn affected it.” No school is an island in this view, and no educational program operates in a vacuum.⁴⁸ Rather, education transpires in the interplay between various educative institutions.

Extrapolating from this perception to the case of Jewish education, it behooves us to consider the range of local schools and programs as a potential network that might link together and, if properly connected, amount to more than the sum of its parts. Imagine that early childhood programs were strongly connected with synagogues, congregational schools, and day schools, and that the educators of preschool children worked with parents to lead them to what might be the next step in their children’s Jewish education. Imagine that schools, synagogues, summer camps, youth movements, and Israel trips were coordinated so that the child would be seen as moving naturally between each of these institutions and that each was therefore responsible to link its program to the programs of the others—and not duplicate them. Would not such a system of configurations be far more effective

and reinforcing of Jewish education? Moreover, if the unit of analysis is the family and how well *it* moves through the educational system, rather than the strengths or weaknesses of individual schools and programs, the educational configuration looms larger. Would not coordination of schools and programs help the parents/consumers make their way through the system far more efficiently than is currently the case? And would not the schools and programs themselves also benefit from linkages to one another, so that educators could hand off learners, exchange curricular information, pool resources, and plan for greater efficiency in delivering services?

None of the communities under discussion has anything remotely resembling such a coordinated system. Quite the contrary, diffusion of resources, energy, and personnel characterizes much of local Jewish education. The question is why: Why have communities failed to develop a system that is configured to maximize the Jewish education it delivers rather than diffuse it through a large number of disconnected institutions?

There are several serious impediments, of course, to developing such a system. Who, after all, is the proper convener of Jewish education in a community? If it is the federation, there are quite a few programs that are only minimally connected to the federation—particularly those based in congregations, which for the most part are loosely connected to the federation. It might be hard for the federation to bring all these groups to the same table. If it is the central agency, there are turf rivalries. Why should the central agency, which raises relatively small sums of money, assume the role of educational czar? Why should it get the credit, if the federation is doing the heavy lifting of raising the serious money? And why should various schools and programs that were founded and are funded independently take their orders from a central agency that played no role in their creation and maintenance? Alternatively, perhaps a federation continuity commission should play the coordinating role, as is the case in Boston. But such commissions generally consist of lay people plus a few key staff people. Why give so much power to the staff people? Ultimately, then, the critical question is how to create legitimacy and confer authority on one of these institutions so that it can serve as the convener.⁴⁹

A second major impediment to achieving coordination is the vacuum in leadership. Somebody within the community would have to work hard to address the multiple turf rivalries, mobilize financial resources, and persuade people to come together for the greater good of families and children. There is a serious challenge here in the area of community-building, and few localities are up to that challenge. When the Mandel Foundation launched its project called the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) in the early 1990s, it initially spoke of creating “wall-to-wall” coalitions within its so-called lead communities. It worked to bring the various players aboard in an agreed-upon plan to cooperate. The hope of forging such cooperation was quickly dropped, as the CIJE project focused on other goals, perhaps more attainable ones.

Most important, some would argue that coordination is neither feasible nor desirable in the American environment. Given the entrepreneurial, individualistic nature of American society, coordination would prove the exception, and compe-

tition and duplication would be the expected norm. Given the larger American educational context in which there is no centralization, no standardization, and little capacity to build cumulative learning, why imagine that Jewish education could be any different? Given the free marketplace of religion in American society, how could Jewish religious institutions operate in a cooperative, rather than competitive mode? And given the successful emergence of schools and programs of Jewish education without centralized help, what would be the advantage of a more coordinated approach? Perhaps, the current anarchic system described at the opening of this paper is not only the best we can hope for but has actually served the Jewish community well.

Although these objections merit serious consideration and should discourage a serious effort at educational centralization on the national level, they do not overshadow the serious drawbacks to the current anarchy in the field of Jewish education. Jewish educational programs and schools have limited resources. Why should they not cooperate to maximize those resources, to share curricula and ideas, to purchase supplies and educational materials in bulk, and to work together on priorities that are otherwise scantied? And as to learners and their families, much can be gained if they are not lost in the shuffle from one institution to the next. Greater coordination and planning can enhance the educational experience. After all, if the Jewish community did not believe this, why would it maintain a federated system? And if federations believe in the virtues of their approach, why would they not work to improve coordination in the area of Jewish education?

Despite the serious impediments and potential for turf battles, American Jewish communities need to revisit the CIJE ideal of building “wall-to-wall coalitions”—or at least strive to align the various schools and program of education. Under current circumstances, students are often lost in the transition from one stage of Jewish education to the next. Families often do not have the necessary information to determine how and where their children should enroll to enhance their educational experience. And the linkages between programs are so loose that there is much unnecessary duplication and incoherence from one to the next. That each Jewish community has its own distinctive “culture of Jewish education” is apparent. But by working within those distinctive cultures, much good can be done if educational leaders are nurtured to think systemically and encouraged to work toward connecting schools, programs, families, and the community.⁵⁰ All the players stand to benefit, and the anarchy of Jewish education can be reduced. Most important, learners would have the opportunity to receive an integrated Jewish education, drawing on the formal and informal programs available. The whole of local Jewish education in each community can be far more than the sum of its parts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Based on the following diverse sources, I have pieced together my own account of the varied “cultures of Jewish education” in these seven communities. I alone am responsible for the community portraits, and I take responsibility for errors or distortions that may appear in

this account of a highly complex, usually diffuse, and rapidly changing set of educational arrangements. The research for this study was completed in the spring of 2005.

I deeply appreciate the information and perspectives provided by more than eighty knowledgeable informants who took the time to speak with me. I am delighted to acknowledge their graciously offered and unstinting help.

On national and comparative matters, I benefited from conversations with Dr. Steven Brown, Jewish Theological Seminary; Prof. Adam Gamoran, University of Wisconsin; Prof. Ellen Goldring, Vanderbilt School of Education; Prof. Barry Holtz, Jewish Theological Seminary; Dr. Leora Isaacs, Jewish Education Service of North America; Dr. Steven Kraus, Jewish Education Service of North America; Dr. Alisa Rubin Kurshan, UJA-Federation of New York; Prof. Sara Lee, Rhea Hirsch School of Jewish Education, Hebrew Union College; Prof. Joseph Reimer, Brandeis University; Prof. Susan Shevitz, Brandeis University; Dr. Jack Ukeles, Ukeles Associates, New York; Prof. Harold Wechsler, New York University.

In Atlanta: Rabbi Steven Balaban, Davis Day School; Prof. Michael Berger, Emory University and former acting director of a day school; Deborah Goldstein Cirulnick, JCC of Atlanta; Rabbi Stanley Davids; Cheryl Finkel, former director of Epstein Day School; Dr. Paul Flexner, Jewish Educational Services of Atlanta; George Fox, lay leader; Shira Ledman, Jewish Federation of Atlanta; Noah Levine, Jewish Federation of Atlanta; Miriam Rosenbaum, Epstein Day School.

In Boston: Cheryl Aronson, Combined Jewish Philanthropies; Marjory Tarmy Berkowitz, Prozdor Program, Hebrew College; Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, Maimonides School; Marion Gribetz, Bureau of Jewish Education; Carolyn Keller, Metrowest Jewish Day School; Adina Kling, Combined Jewish Philanthropies; George Krupp, lay leader; Rabbi Daniel Lehman, Gann Academy; Dr. Daniel Margolis, Bureau of Jewish Education; Rabbi J. J. Schachter, Soloveitchik Institute; Prof. David Starr, Meah Program, Hebrew College.

In Chicago: Rabbi Michael Balinsky, Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools; Marci Dickman, Solomon Schechter School; Dr. Peter Friedman, Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; Tzivia Garfinkle, Bernard Zell-Anshei Emet Day School; Rabbi Nina J. Mizrahi, Director, Pritzker Center for Jewish Education; Wendy Platt Newberger, day school lay leader; Rabbi Yechiel Poupko, JUF/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; William Rubin, Community Foundation for Jewish Education; Max Skip Schroyer, education and federation lay leader; Rabbi Michael Siegel, Anshei-Emet congregation; Rabbi Harvey Well, Associated Talmud Torahs.

In Los Angeles: Dr. David Ackerman, Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education; Metuka Benjamin, Stephen S. Wise Day School; Prof. Michael Berenbaum, University of Judaism; Rabbi Richard Camaras; Rabbi Edward Feinstein; Dr. Jerry Friedman, director of Shalhevet High School; Rabbi Laura Geller; Dr. Gil Graff, Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education; Mark Lainer, philanthropist and lay leader; Rabbi Mitch Malkus, Pressman Academy; Rabbi Harold Schulweis; Prof. Ron Wolfson, University of Judaism and Synagogue 2000.

In Philadelphia: Dr. Sol Daiches, Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia; Rabbi David Glanzburg-Krainin; Rabbi Andrea Merow; Brian Mono, Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia; Rochelle Rabeey, Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education; Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom; Dan Segal, lay leader; Rabbi Lance Sussman; Dr. Helene Tigay, Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education; Dr. Saul Wachs, Gratz College.

In Saint Louis: Ed Becker, lay leader; Fran Cantor, lay leader; Dr. Stephen Cohen, Jew-

ish Federation of Saint Louis; Rabbi Joshua Einzig, Epstein Day School; Marsha Grazman, Mirowitz Day School—Reform Jewish Academy; Maurice Guller, lay leader; Jeffrey Lasday, Central Agency for Jewish Education; Rabbi Mordechai Miller; Susan Witte, Jewish Federation of Saint Louis; Joan Wolchansky, Jewish Family Education, Central Agency for Jewish Education.

In San Francisco: Sheila Baumgarten, Koret Foundation; Sandra Edwards, Koret Foundation; Prof. Arnold Eisen, Stanford University; Dr. Vicky Kelman, Bureau of Jewish Education; Laura Heller Lauder, lay leader; Janis Sherman Popp, lay leader; Mark Reisbaum, Jewish Community Endowment Fund; Dr. Robert Sherman, Bureau of Jewish Education; Estee Solomon-Gray, lay leader; Gail Zucker, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco.

NOTES

1. This is how Jonathan Woocher, the head of the Jewish Education Services of North America, memorably characterized the national field of Jewish education in a private conversation.

2. Some supplementary programs are based not in synagogues but in communal or independent settings.

3. This report serves as a snapshot taken at a particular time, between 2003 and 2005. As will become abundantly evident, communal priorities and funding do not remain static, and emphases change. Some communities invest heavily in a particular educational vehicle, only to switch focus because an interested donor has come along or a particular educational leader has departed the scene.

4. Fran Nachman Putney, "New Federation Study Confirms Young, Middle-Class Migration to Alpharetta and Beyond," *Atlanta Jewish Times*, June 20, 2004. At the end of 2005, the Atlanta federation announced that it had leased space in a far suburb on behalf of a range of Jewish service institutions. See Beob Menaker, "North Side Story: Federation to Open Multi-agency Alpharetta Campus," *Atlanta Jewish Times*, December 30, 2005. Accessed on JTA Online.

5. <http://atlantakollel.org/about.htm>.

6. I am grateful to Dr. Adam Ferziger of Bar Ilan University for sharing an advanced draft of his manuscript titled "The Community Kollel in America: An Emerging Model for Confronting Assimilation." He addresses the Atlanta Kollel on pp. 35–36.

7. Walter Ackerman, "From Past to Present: Notes from the History of Jewish Education in Boston," *Jewish Education* (Fall 1983): 17.

8. The "Boston system" of Jewish education in the first half of the twentieth century was encapsulated as follows: It was a model that strove to "serve, improve, and coordinate Jewish education in Greater Boston." The system encompassed "a central figure, sufficient funding from a credible, broadly-based community agency, and working schools, reasonably sound politically, professionally, and pedagogically." Next came the creation of a Bureau of Jewish Education, and finally, the effort to "raise standards" through training programs for teachers. Daniel J. Margolis, "The Evolution and Uniqueness of the Jewish Educational Structure of Greater Boston," in Alexander M. Schapiro and Burton I. Cohen, eds., *Studies in Jewish Education and Judaica in Honor of Louis Newman* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), 86–88.

9. Joseph Reimer, "Passionate Visions in Contest: On the History of Jewish Education in Boston," in Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith, eds., *The Jews of Boston* (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1995), 284–87.

10. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Jews of Boston in Historical Perspective," in *The Jews of Boston*, 15.

11. For more on this theme, see Reimer, "Passionate Visions," 299–300.

12. Report of the Strategic Planning Committee, "A Culture of Learning, a Vision of Justice, a Community of Caring" (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies, January 1998), 7–8. Subsequent references to this source will be cited parenthetically in the text by page number.

13. CJP's Commission on Jewish Continuity and Education, "Telling Our Story, 1989–2005."

14. The CJP's teaming with Haifa has permeated quite a few educational programs, including the teen experiences.

15. "Strategic Goals for FY05," drafted by Cheryl Aronson, director of the Commission on Jewish Continuity and Education, October 2004.

16. Brandeis University, with its large assortment of Jewish studies faculty, has taken a less visible role in communal education, perhaps because it regards itself as a national institution. Brandeis is primarily engaged in local Jewish education through its Delet Program to train educators as potential school directors; its faculty of education perform evaluation work for communal programs, and some Brandeis professors partake in communal deliberations or teach in the Meah program.

17. See Uriel Heilman, "Record Day-School Gift in Boston May Set Example around the Country," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 11, 2004; and Michael Paulson, "Jewish Day Schools Given \$45m Gift," *Boston Globe*, October 11, 2004.

18. It should be noted that 75 percent of Prozdor teens are drawn from Conservative synagogues. Reform temples for the most part refuse to do business with Prozdor and insist on educating their own teens.

19. Amy L. Sales, Annette Koren, and Susan Shevitz, *Sha'arim: Building Gateways to Jewish Life and Community; A Report on Boston's Jewish Family Educator Initiative* (Waltham, Mass.: Commission on Jewish Continuity, BJE, and Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2000), 26–28.

20. The current head of the North American federation system, Howard Rieger, reflected on the "culture of direction from central organizations" on which Chicago is built. He noted that in the Jewish community, "outcomes are determined by the fact that not much is left to chance." "Howard's View," April 22, 2005, disseminated by the United Jewish Communities in New York.

21. The JUF Web site counts the federation's allocations somewhat differently, claiming to have channeled \$15.7 million to causes that build Jewish identity and community in 2003–4. Not all of this can be construed as designated for Jewish education.

22. One of the noteworthy exceptions to this rule is George Hanus, an attorney and ardent day school activist, who has single-handedly launched a "Superfund for Jewish Education and Continuity," along with a newspaper (the *World Jewish Digest*) and a master's degree program with a local Catholic university to train Jewish educators. At first, his efforts may have served as a useful goad to pressure the JUF to support day school education, but well after the federation created *two* new endowment funds, Hanus continues to promote his

own alternative "superfund." All of these efforts are indicative of duplication and competition, rather than coordination and cooperation in Chicago.

23. Julie Gruenbaum Fax, "The \$45 Million Question," *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, November 21, 2004.

24. Ibid.

25. The pattern in such communities was analyzed in a report prepared by the Council of Jewish Federations in 1994. See *Reinventing Our Jewish Community: Can the West Be Won? A Report to the Jewish Communities of the Western United States and the Council of Jewish Federations*, December 1994.

26. Enrollment in Orthodox day schools over the same period has roughly held steady, with even a slight increase. Bureau of Jewish Education, "Recent Trends in BJE-Affiliated Yeshivot/Day Schools (36 Schools): 2000-2003," Report, June 2004.

27. See "The BJE at 65: No Time to Retire. 2002," 9, where the pupil-to-BJE staff ratios in eight communities are compared.

28. As an example, the bureau is seeking foundation support for funded vouchers to enable children in poor families to attend day schools.

29. Pini Herman, "Needs of the Community: A Classification of Needs and Services for the L.A. Jewish Community" (Los Angeles: Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, 1997), 15.

30. As an expression of this partnership, the federation lent its vice president of planning and allocations to the BJE for two years to serve as a consultant on "operational issues" through the Bureau of Jewish Education. Her job will be to "streamline operations, improve marketing and development," and help the schools use their collective purchasing powers to cut costs on "everything from supplies to insurance." Fax, "The \$45 Million Question."

31. Basil J. Whiting, "Philadelphia: Prospects and Challenges at the End of the Decade," report to the Pew Charitable Trusts, May 1999, 7.

32. Jonathan Rosenbaum and Helene Z. Tigay, "Jewish Education in Philadelphia: Historic Precedents and New Observations," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 78, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 196.

33. The plan is outlined in ACAJE/Foundations, "Professional Development Initiative: Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools (NESS), Proposal Summary." See also "Engaging and Retaining Jewish Youth beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah: An Action Research Study" (Philadelphia: Auerbach CAJE, 2002).

34. The Perelman School is noteworthy for landing the single largest gift in the history of the Philadelphia Jewish community, a bequest of \$20 million from the Kimmel family. That and the Perelman gift appear to be the only significant investment in Jewish education generated within the community.

35. Walter Ehrlich, *Zion in the Valley: The Jewish Community of St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 2:348-49.

36. Ibid., 379.

37. Task Force on Conservative Jewish Education, "Recommendations," January 27, 2004, 11.

38. Commission on Reform Jewish Education Task Force, draft proposal for Commission on Reform Jewish Education, October 10, 2002.

39. Strategic Planning Committee report of the Central Agency for Jewish Education, June 8, 2003, 8.

40. Joe Eskenazi, "And the Survey Says: Population Spike Makes Bay Area the 3rd Most

Jewish in U.S.," *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, June 10, 2005. This article reports on a demographic survey directed by Bruce Phillips.

41. For a recent survey of these schools and their burgeoning programs, see Steven Friedman, "What's Ahead for Area Day Schools: More Students, More Classes, More Innovation," *Jewish Weekly of Northern California*, August 7, 2004.

42. For a discussion of the Levine-Lent Foundation and its goals for a tuition voucher program, see "Day School, Tuition, Subvention, Reduction and Scholarship Programs," report of the Continental Council for Jewish Education, June 2003, 12.

43. It appears that synagogue-based Jewish education is not well integrated into other communal efforts. The federation invests a pittance in supplementary schooling, and rabbis are not perceived as important participants in local educational efforts.

44. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (January 1995): 75.

45. See chapter 9 in this volume by Shaul Kelner and Steven M. Cohen, which examines how those investments affect the participation of children in the range of programs.

46. "Strategic Issue Priorities from the 1998 MetroWest Jewish Population Study. UJF Board of Trustee Survey Results." See William D. Neigher, "The Process Is the Plan: Defining Strategic Community Futures," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 26 (2003): esp. 450.

47. The Whizin Institute drew some favorable comments in the area of family education, as did some video-conference classes offered by the Siegel College of Jewish Education in Cleveland.

48. Lawley A. Cremin, *Traditions of American Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 142.

49. A related planning issue for federations is why so much energy should be invested in coordinating local Jewish education, when a similar level of cooperation should be forged regarding social services or Israel-related activities. Why should a community do more, in other words, for Jewish education than it does for other aspects of its work? The answer, of course, is that this need not be a zero-sum game. The success of educational coordination may translate into other areas of heightened cooperation.

40. For some reflection on the need for such connections within the field of public education, see Joyce L. Epstein and Mavis G. Sanders, "Connecting Home, School, and Community: New Directions for Social Research," in Maureen T. Hallinan, ed., *Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000), 285-306.