

Definition of Jewish-Zionist Education

Daniel J. Elazar

Jewish-Zionist education is concerned with teaching the beliefs, content, and spirit of Jewish civilization in a manner that reflects the diversity of Jewish civilization today. It strives to heighten the Jewish consciousness of Jewish youth at all levels of education, to deepen their roots in our nation's past and its religious and historical heritage, and to strengthen their attachment to world Jewry out of the recognition of the common fate and historical continuity which unites Jews everywhere in their lands and across the generation. It is education informed by a Zionist understanding that recognizes the vital importance of the Land and State of Israel and the national and spiritual character of the Jewish People.

This definition recognizes both the national and the religious dimensions of Jewish existence, fully allowing their diverse expression.

Some criteria that may be used in judging a school's implementation of this definition:

1. Instruction in the fundamentals of Hebrew as a language and as a means of expressing Jewish ideas.
2. Acknowledgment and celebration of the state of Israel and its holidays.
3. Teaching classic Jewish texts such as the Bible, the Talmud, and the Siddur.
4. Teaching Jewish history.
5. Developing programs to allow students to continue their studies in Israel.
6. The teaching of Jewish tradition, both religious and national.
7. Teaching Jewish civics and commitment to the unity and solidarity of the Jewish people.