

January 16, 1969

This is the synopsis of an evaluation of the United Hebrew Schools based on a survey by Dr. Samuel Dinsky, Director, Department of the Community Service of the American Association for Jewish Education.

#### A. UNIQUENESS

The United Hebrew Schools is an unique institution:

1. It is inter-congregational, serving five Congregations as follows:

Beth El Temple	271	Students
Kodimoh Synagogue	140	"
B'nai Jacob Synagogue	48	"
Beth Israel Synagogue	12	"
Sinai Temple	12	"
Unaffiliated	47	"

or a total of 530 students in the Elementary Department.

2. It is trans-ideological meaning, that it serves more than one ideological trend of the Jewish Community. In this respect, the United Hebrew Schools is not alone. There is an increasing number of similar schools reported throughout the country. There is definitely a trend in this direction trying to overcome fragmentation in the community and doing away with unviable schools by pooling of resources. Furthermore this trend seems to include in greater measure the Reform Movement. And finally, the developing trend is for community Hebrew schools which are both inter-congregational and trans-ideological.

#### B. QUALITY OF SCHOOL

1. It is a school of excellence. It has high standards and it is both intensively Hebraic and religiously oriented without any dichotomy. The curricula and syllabi are carefully graded and there seems to be a summulative growth from grade to grade.
2. The school has a full program of co-curricular activities which enhances and enriches its educational offerings, e.g.
  - a) The Student Council and its activities such as Keren Ami, JNF Tree Planting, School Newspaper, etc.
  - b) Student activities such as Succot Contest, Zimriah, Annual Essay Contest and Model Seder.
3. On the basis of records checked a good number of classes perform well above the national average as measured by objective tests. However, at this moment it is to be noted that the American Association is preparing a whole battery of tests and in the future they all should be included in this testing program. The achievement could also be measured by observation in classes which he visited. The children impressed him as being well-mannered, knowledgeable in what they were studying, volunteering with their lessons.

C. FACULTY

This is a group of professional, competent teachers. What is remarkable about this group is its staying power and this is a compliment to the educational leadership both on the lay and professional level. What impresses is its teamwork, meaning that each teacher seems to know precisely what he or she has to do in relation to teachers of other grades so together they build up towards a comprehensive school program. What also impresses is the rapport between teacher and teacher and between teachers and principal. It is a staff devoted to their work, they all prepare their lesson plans, they all give homework and mark them; finally, it is a compliment to the quality of the staff that the Hebrew Teachers College of Boston has found it fit to appoint some of its staff as instructors in its off-campus program in Springfield.

D. ADMINISTRATION

The administration is on a very high level of efficiency which is both a tribute to the principal, to the office personnel and lay leadership. Whenever Dr. Dinsky requested records or on-the-spot information, they were furnished to him without hesitation, pointing to great efficiency in all these areas. Retention of students is excellent, and so is the proportion of girls compared with boys in the school.

The Code of Practice is generally good but it is seriously lacking in the areas pertaining to the salary scale of the teachers and their fringe benefits. The salary scale is far below the national average; there is no life insurance, neither is there health insurance for the staff, and pension only for full time personnel.

E. P.T.O. - OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAM

Some of the services rendered by the school are quite diversified. However, the two services which stand out is the program of P.T.O. which ranges in its activities from providing Israel Scholarship to Parent Seminars. However, parent education ought to be intensified in the future. Also a special tribute to the school is its off-campus teacher training program in cooperation with the Hebrew Teachers College of Boston and American Association for Jewish Education. It is the only school in the United States which provides such kind of a teacher training program. However, the question should be raised why this worthwhile program is not being offered to the entire community.

F. FINANCES

This is an analysis of the finances for the year 1967-68.

1. Of the budget of \$136,000.00, the three partners, parents, congregation, and community, pay as follows; parents - \$64,000.00 or 48% which is above the national average of 40% for community schools. The subsidizing congregations pay \$17,000.00 or 12% which is below what congregations do pay on a national average.

The United Jewish Welfare pays \$52,000.00 or 40% of the budget which again is a good portion of local allocation. Parenthetically there is approximately \$3,000.00 deficit left, a bill footed by no one.

2. Though a tuition fee of \$150.00 is being charged, it actually is only a tuition fee of \$110.00 since the sum of \$40.00 for transportation is included.
3. Included in this figure of \$150.00 is also Bar Mitzvah instruction which is unique to the situation in Springfield. While it should be the schools' responsibility to prepare students on a group basis for their Bar Mitzvah training and to provide staff for special training; it should however be the parent's responsibility to pay for services rendered in preparing the child individually for his Bar Mitzvah. Many communities have a substantial Bar Mitzvah fee instruction charge during the pre-Bar Mitzvah year, in addition to the regular tuition fee.
4. Collection of monies is excellent.
5. On the basis of \$240.00 which is the per capita cost to educate a child, the community is getting more than its dollar value.

#### G. RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Dinsky then made the following recommendations based on his observations:

##### 1. HIGH SCHOOL

The High School needs to be restructured. Though intentions are good and aspirations are high, it has not yet achieved the status of a recognized high school. Therefore, the Board has to consider the introduction of a six hour per week program. The two hours devoted to Hebrew and the two hours devoted to Judaic studies are neither sufficient for the Hebrew nor for Judaic studies. In fact, what should be considered is a dual track six hours per week program in Hebraic or Judaic studies. What also could be considered is a pre-college program for senior high school students.

Also in terms of the size of the school and certainly in terms of the size of the community, the enrollment in the High School is far from adequate.

##### 2. LIBRARY

Another strong recommendation is the establishment of a comprehensive library both in Hebraic and Judaic which would be serving the students of our school, the teachers and parents.

3. DIVERSIFICATION OF CURRICULUM

A third great need is the necessity of diversifying the curriculum. Though Dr. Dinsky is aware of some of the problems pertaining to our school all efforts should be extended of seeing to it that the program be diversified to include accelerated classes for high achievers and a curriculum more designed for the slow students, with the majority for those in the middle which is now severely lacking.

4. COMMUNITY APPROACH TO JEWISH EDUCATION

The final recommendation is, in fact, the most radical and includes the entire community. In fact, this should become the prime responsibility of the community. A child is a member of the community, therefore, his Jewish education must become its primary concern and a priority of the Jewish Community Council.

- a) Only a community which can bring all the agencies together such as Synagogue, the Center and major adult organizations, can provide a total plan to Jewish education which means first, elimination of divisiveness and education for all members of the community from primary grades to adult level but with special emphasis on teen-age, pre-college and college level.
- b) Only a full cooperation and proper funding can bring about a meaningful high school program which would have status as a community high school.
- c) Only through a community approach can we reach the many children who at this moment have received no Jewish education.
- d) Only through a total and massive community approach can we make Jewish education truly relevant by creating a community environment conducive to properly learn and live intensively as a Jew. Club activities at the Center and elsewhere must be designed to dovetail with what the child is learning in the Hebrew school, otherwise they are apt to undo rather to reinforce that which the children learn in Hebrew school.
- e) The summer program must be intensified for the purposes of Jewish education. The Center Day Camp and Hebrew school should plan more cooperatively. Israel Scholarships should be provided.
- f) Only through community planning can there be a proper sharing of resources such as busing and making off-campus teacher training program available to all teachers in the community.
- g) Finally, community planning for Jewish education would mean training of necessary leadership for clubs, lay leadership for education and bringing together all professional and lay leaders for the purpose of promoting cooperatively Jewish education. In so doing, there would also be an on-going process of dialogue between the Community Council and Jewish educational agencies, appraising of their progress and their problems.

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Since the Evaluation by Dr. Dinsky of the UHS, officers have met repeatedly to determine problem areas that need immediate correction,

The officers found such areas:

1. Regain, if possible lost instruction time, due to later dismissal time at Longmeadow schools.

To meet this need officers recommended a double session on Sunday morning, with each class meeting every Sunday.

However, to implement this recommendation, the following needs to be done:

- a. Beth El Confirmation classes to meet from 8:45-10:45, which would then free 5 class rooms for utilization at 10:45.
- b. Furnishing properly classrooms 1, 2, 4
- c. Partition of Assembly Hall, for the purpose of installing two more class rooms.

2. Introducing a diversified curriculum, more attuned to performances of students.

To meet this need officers recommend arranging classes in such a way that all classes of the same grade meet on the same day. In such a scheme all first, 3rd and 5th grades would be meeting on one set of days, 2nd, 4th and 6th graders on another set of days.

To implement such a program, which means liberating our school from geography, our school will have to solve two major problems:

- a. ability to transport students, irrespective of geography, with buses available. It was therefore suggested that we consider engaging of some taxis where few children are being picked up from a particular school, or when from outlying districts.
- b. the second problem is the great disparity in pickup time from Springfield and Longmeadow schools on Tuesdays, (1 hour difference), and for Junior High students (3/4 hour differential)

3. A third area that not only needs our attention but that of the entire community, is the High school program, that needs both a qualitative and quantitative improvement.

Three tentative steps have been proposed to move in the indicated direction:

Dr. Cohen started preliminary talks with Mr Carl Zuckerman, of Herita Academy, for pooling graduates. Mr. Zuckerman seems sympathetic.

A massive program must be initiated for Senior High students, sort of a College preparatory program, with inclusion of speakers with national reputation. This seems an emergency program, that needs special funding by the community.

Intensification of the High school program, with a possible dual program, one more Hebraic and the other more Judaic in philosophy, so as to meet the needs of participating students.

To implement such a program, there are three alternatives:

1. Sunday morning, run by Congregation, ~~and two evenings per week~~ and two evenings per week (this program may find the greatest resistance by students)
2. Sunday morning by Congregation, and in addition one evening, as heretofore and one afternoon. The real problem here is engagement of special High school staff, which would be difficult both from the standpoint of financing and availability.
3. The third alternative would be as follows:

	1	2	3	4
5	✓	x		
5	✓	x		
5	✓	x		
5	✓	x		
6				
6				
6				
I a	x	x		
b	x	✓	✓	
IIa	x	x		
b	x	✓	✓	
IIIa	x	x		
b	x	✓	✓	

- a. Sunday morning an interlocked program, where special staff may be employed to instruct one hour in Junior High level. Instruction time may be three or 4 hours. for High school.
- b. If this program be adopted, it would mean that we should have to compromise for double sessions for 5th and 6th gr. since there would be not enough class rooms for all these activities.
- c. In addition to Sunday morning there would be regular Tue eve classes as heretofore.

4. A 4th Area of concern was alerting the community to its role in Jewish Education. So far, the only suggestion made was to organize co-ordinated Workshop sessions, chaired by experts.
5. Our fifth area of concern was the adoption of a Budget that would reflect the real needs of Jewish education.