

EDUCATORS IN JEWISH SCHOOLS STUDY (EJSS)

JESNA Publications and Dissemination Project:
An Initiative of JESNA's Learnings & Consultation Center

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

JESNA's Berman Center for Research
and Evaluation in Jewish Education

The best way to
predict the future
is to invent it.



Jewish Education Service
of North America

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

JESNA is profoundly grateful to Bill Berman, Eddie Kaplan, and the Covenant Foundation who inspired, guided, and funded the Educators in Jewish Schools Study (EJSS) and this publication. Their vision, commitment, and support for high-quality research to guide programs and policy for the Jewish community is unparalleled.

This work would be impossible without the unwavering support and guidance of our Board, which has made the recruitment, retention, recognition, and professional development of Jewish educators a key strategic focus for JESNA. Special thanks to our officer and Board member Arnee Winshall for her consistent leadership and tireless advocacy on behalf of educators.

This project is a collaborative endeavor of researchers Drs. Jeffrey Kress and Michael Ben-Avie and a staff team from JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation and Learnings and Consultation Center, led by Dr. Shira Rosenblatt. Their research skills, knowledge of the field, and diligent work have advanced our knowledge and understanding of the field and laid the groundwork for further exploration and action.



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INTRODUCTION

The *Educators in Jewish Schools Study (EJSS)* is an important first step toward creating an accurate, research-based portrait of educators in Jewish day and complementary¹ schools in North America. Commissioned, guided, and published by JESNA (Jewish Education Service of North America), EJSS is a large-scale study that collected essential descriptive information about Jewish educators (teachers)² in Jewish day and complementary schools.³ The findings not only paint a vivid snapshot of the teachers in the field today, but also provide data that may inform key stakeholders about the factors that motivate educators to enter and to remain in the field of Jewish education in Jewish day and complementary schools. The EJSS findings also enable JESNA to clarify additional questions that may be answered through in-depth analyses in the future. Ideally, this EJSS report will stimulate critical discussions necessary for responsible policy and decision-making in Jewish education.

Excellent Jewish educators are essential to cultivating knowledgeable, passionate, and dedicated Jewishly identified individuals of every age. Several thousand Jewish educators in the U.S. and Canada are teaching thousands of our children

in kindergarten through 12th grade in “formal educational” venues — approximately 800 Jewish day schools and 2,000 complementary schools run by congregations and other non-profit Jewish communal organizations. While the Jewish community has no shortage of ideas about how to structure and strengthen these educational institutions, there is little empirical data available about the educators. Without this information, decision-makers lack a sufficiently complete context for the field in which they are considering Jewish education policy and planning educational change.

It is for these reasons that JESNA’s Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education and JESNA’s Learnings and Consultation Center collaborated on this Publications and Dissemination Project (PDP). JESNA’s key learning goals for EJSS were to discover:

- Who are the educators that teach in Jewish day and complementary schools?
- What led them to a career in Jewish education?
- How do they perceive their current positions?
- What factors influence their decisions to remain in the field?

¹ Throughout this report, “complementary schools” includes congregational, supplemental, religious, Hebrew schools, and other nomenclature referring to *part-time* Jewish education for students in grades K–12 of any denomination (e.g., Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Humanist, Renewal, and Community [transdenominational]).

² Throughout this report, “teacher(s)” and “educator(s)” are used interchangeably. The educator sample includes primarily teachers and some special personnel and second-level administrators (i.e., not heads of schools).

³ Descriptive data include key demographics, details about current positions, educators’ motivations, professional development, factors influencing retention, and more.

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ABOUT THE EJSS REPORT

In order to answer the four main research questions noted in the introduction, the EJSS research was conducted in two distinct phases. In Phase One, the Jewish Educational Change Research Team, led by Michael Ben-Avie, Ph.D., of the Yale Child Study Center, and Jeffrey Kress, Ph.D., of the Jewish Theological Seminary, conducted data collection and managed data entry for the EJSS study. These researchers also conducted their own analyses of the EJSS data for a separate and distinct research project. Phase Two focused on JESNA's analysis of the EJSS dataset to answer key research questions.

Phase One

During Phase One, the researchers developed a comprehensive registry⁴ of Jewish day and complementary schools in the U.S. and Canada. The twofold goal of the registry was to provide a comprehensive listing and overview of Jewish day and complementary schools in North America and to help guide the selection of the core sample schools that would administer surveys to educators and administrators for the random sample study.

Guided by JESNA, the researchers adapted and refined the data gathering process based on the original *Learning and Development in Jewish Schools: Educator Survey* (developed at the Yale Child Study Center) to address issues related to recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators in Jewish day and complementary schools. The researchers employed rigorous

measures to ensure the reliability of the *Educator Survey*⁵ and engaged leading researchers in a thorough review process,⁶ incorporating their feedback into the final version of the survey and adding items to complete the alignment of the survey with the goals of EJSS.

The EJSS researchers used three distribution strategies to maximize the response rate to the *Educator Survey*:

1. A core random sample (to ensure the study sample was representative of the population as a whole);
2. An agency sample;⁷ and
3. Online recruitment (an invitation to all schools included in the inventory).

Considerations for determining the appropriate sample size for the EJSS study included budget, statistical issues, and practical/logistical issues. Based on national studies that used a methodological approach similar to EJSS, researchers drew a general random representative sample (10%) from the *2006 Registry of Jewish Day and Congregational Schools in the United States and Canada* calculated according to specific criteria for the inclusion of day and complementary schools.⁸

The original random sampling process yielded a list of 55 Jewish day schools and 133 complementary schools. Ultimately, to generate a larger sample, the researchers launched an online recruitment effort

⁴ Michael Ben-Avie and Jeffrey Kress. (2006). *2006 Registry of Jewish Day and Congregational Schools in the United States and Canada*. (New York: Jewish Educational Change).

⁵ The researchers fielded two pilot studies in spring, 2006, to evaluate the psychometric properties of the EJSS *Educator Survey*. They also conducted an internal consistency reliability analysis on 76 core items (not including demographic items), yielding Cronbach's Alpha of .828 (considered a positive result for a pilot study).

⁶ Dr. Maurice Elias (Rutgers University), Dr. Adam Gamoran (Wisconsin Center for Education Research), and Dr. Roberta Goodman (CAJE) provided perspective on complementary schools. Rabbi Boruch Kaplan (Lubavitch) reviewed the survey to ensure the applicability of the survey to Lubavitch and other Orthodox *yeshivot*.

⁷ The EJSS researchers collaborated with eight central agencies (boards and bureaus of Jewish education): Baltimore, Boston, Broward County (Florida), Detroit, MetroWest (New Jersey), Rockland County (New York), San Francisco, and Toronto. In exchange for actively recruiting schools, these agencies received reports of "grouped" responses of schools in their communities and national norms.

⁸ *Inclusion Criteria for Day Schools*: the school offers grade levels within the K–12 range in which at least 40% of the school's curriculum is devoted to general studies and at least one of the general studies subjects (e.g., Language Arts, Math) is conducted in English. For secondary schools (grades 9–12), at least half of the students must be on a college preparatory track and the school must be accredited by the state (and therefore eligible for federal funds). *Inclusion Criteria for Complementary Schools*: schools hold educationally focused programming more than once a week and employ at least one professional educator.

with all schools included in the inventory by emailing invitations to participate in the EJSS *Educator Survey*. Based on an analysis of the differences among random and non-random samples, Ben-Avie and Kress determined that the educator samples were more similar than different and so combined all responding educators into one database (that is, the database for this EJSS report).⁹ A total of 1,546 educators responded to the *Educator Survey*. Of these, 53% (819) are teachers in Jewish day schools. The remaining 47% of educators (724) teach in complementary school settings. Of the *Educator Survey* respondents in this sample, teachers came from 110 Jewish day schools and 195 complementary schools. Within participating schools, all educators were invited to complete the EJSS *Educator Survey*. We do not know in what ways the educators who completed the survey were similar to or different from the educators who did not complete the survey. The number of respondents per day school ranged from one to 56 and the number of respondents per complementary school ranged from one to 19. Most frequently, there was one respondent per school.¹⁰ It is important to note that the EJSS sample of schools, while derived from the registry, may not mirror exactly the denominational breakdown of schools in the registry.

Researchers also sent administrators of these same schools an email invitation to participate in an online *Administrator Survey* to obtain contextual descriptive information about the schools (e.g., enrollment, affiliation, accreditation, governance, etc.) and to better understand the challenges administrators faced recruiting and retaining teachers. The *Administrator Survey* also was designed to capture data at the “school level” to complement data collected through the *Educator*

Survey. Twenty-seven (27) Jewish day school administrators (approximately 7% of all schools that responded to the registry) and 116 complementary school administrators (approximately 10% of all schools that responded to the registry) responded to the online survey.¹¹

Phase Two

The purpose of Phase Two of the study was to delve deeper into the EJSS data on certain key issues to be able to more easily understand the policy-related implications of the information that was gathered. In this phase, JESNA focused on identifying key leverage points (that is, those variables that can be manipulated) in the dataset it received from the researchers. JESNA conducted analyses that probed further into the data, including analyses that posited relationships between variables, resulting in a more nuanced understanding of the findings and more detailed knowledge about the educators working in Jewish day and complementary schools.

JESNA prepared the dataset for analyses focusing on day and complementary school educators, created new variables from existing ones (when necessary), and conducted analyses that helped to develop a portrait of today’s Jewish day school and complementary school educators.

The Next Phase

This EJSS report is results-oriented. That is, JESNA intends that the EJSS data and the report’s conclusions will encourage educators, administrators, lay leaders, funders, and other stakeholders to focus their attention on ways to attract and develop a cadre of well-qualified teachers who are invested in their work, satisfied with their careers, and dedicated to

⁹ Only three (3) survey respondents did not indicate the type of school in which they were teaching at the time of the survey.

¹⁰ Note that details of missing data are reported in footnotes in cases where more than 6% of responses are missing. Missing data are excluded from analyses, which are based on the responses received.

¹¹ In four (4) cases, a complementary school administrator said “yes” when asked to respond to the statement, “I have already completed this survey in my role of administrator of another school.” For a complete list of responding schools and registry results, see Michael Ben-Avie and Jeffrey Kress. (2006). *The Educators in Jewish Schools Study: Preliminary Findings from a Registry of Day and Congregational/ Supplemental Schools in North America*. (New York: Jewish Educational Change).

their long-term professional growth in this field. This research will be reflected in JESNA's own programs and approaches to dissemination and application of learnings through demonstration projects, consultations with individual communities, and initiatives with educational networks and communities of practice. In addition, JESNA's research approach will enable the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education and the Learnings and Consultation Center to clarify and/or raise additional research questions that may be answered by conducting bivariate and multivariate analyses with this dataset in the future. These analyses would employ “manipulable” or policy variables as independent variables. For example, an

analysis of educator pay rate categories (as an independent variable) and educator satisfaction in their current school (a dependent variable) could contribute to the ongoing policy debate about the impact of educator salaries. The question of salary could be explored in relation to other dependent variables, such as teaching experience, credentials/academic degree, and gender. Another analysis might explore more extensively links between professional development and different attitudes about career trajectory or could investigate whether school-specific factors (e.g., size, geographic location, religious affiliation) are associated with different outcomes in a range of categories.

By disseminating this EJSS report (and others to come) as widely as possible — in print and through on-site consultations, workshops, and presentations — JESNA hopes that these findings will influence those with the power to make a difference in the professional lives of Jewish educators, to better understand what the field needs, and to develop creative solutions to strengthen our most valuable resources: ***the Jewish educators.***



REGISTRY

Prior to the EJSS study, the Jewish education community lacked a comprehensive, coherent inventory of Jewish day and complementary schools in North America. In the last decade, the Avi Chai Foundation published two day school census reports, *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States (1998–1999)* and *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States (2003–2004)*. Although the Avi Chai Foundation made the lists available to Jewish education researchers, the lists were not included in the publications. No similar comprehensive census of complementary schools has been collected by any single organization and shared with the Jewish education community. To redress this deficit of knowledge, EJSS researchers

compiled a master inventory of Jewish day schools (851) and complementary schools (2,094). These included sites identified by denominational organizations, networks of complementary schools, more than 50 local central agencies and/or bureaus of Jewish education, entries from internet searches, and an examination of previous census studies.¹²

Researchers emailed a registry form to administrators in all day and complementary schools on the initial inventory in the spring of 2006 and made follow-up calls to each school that did not respond. A total of 1,098 complementary schools and 386 day schools participated in the registry.

TABLE 1. HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EJSS REGISTRY¹³

Jewish Day Schools:	Complementary Schools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roughly 25% of both Judaic studies and general studies staff members were newly hired for the 2006 school year; most filled existing positions. • New “special area” teachers were hired at a higher rate (45%). • Eighty-two percent (82%) of schools had 25 or fewer Judaic studies primary instructional staff. • Seven percent (7%) of schools had more than 45 Judaic studies primary instructional staff. • On average, these schools employed 42 staff members, including 18 Judaic studies staff, 20 general studies staff, and four “special subject” staff. • One-third of respondents considered finding qualified staff members easy¹⁴ (a rating lower than “3”), while approximately 45% found it difficult (a rating greater than “3”). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 25% of instructional staff members were newly hired in the 2006 school year; 18% were hired to replace existing staff members. • About half of schools had 20 or fewer instructional staff members, while more than 33% had fewer than 10. Twelve percent (12%) employed 45 or more staff. • Sixty-five percent (65%) had 25 or fewer instructional staff. • Twelve percent (12%) had more than 45 instructional staff. • By and large, staff members were paid for their work. Only about 4% of the schools used an all-volunteer pool of educators. • Eighty-six percent (86%) of schools used congregants as instructional staff and close to one-quarter of schools were staffed entirely or almost entirely by congregants. • Fifty-four percent (54%) of schools used high school students as part of their instructional staff and 47% used college students. • Parents or grandparents of students served as instructional staff in 64% of schools. • Approximately 10% of instructional staff were born or raised in Israel. • One-quarter of administrators indicated the task of finding qualified staff members was not difficult (a rating of “1” or “2”), while approximately half said it was difficult (“4” or “5” rating). The remainder rated the difficulty at a “3.”

¹² Marvin Schick. (2005). *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States 2003–2004*. (New York: The Avi Chai Foundation). The 2003–2004 census established the number of Jewish elementary and secondary day schools at 759, which included approximately 80 more schools than were recorded in the previous census by the Avi Chai Foundation (1998–1999). The author asserts that “The increase reported here results mainly from the establishment of new schools, notably in the Community, Chabad, and Special Education sectors.”

¹³ Ben-Avie and Kress. (2006).

¹⁴ Using a one to five scale where 1 = “not at all difficult” and 5 = “very difficult.”

HOW TO READ THE EJSS REPORT

The EJSS report maps the story of the day and complementary school educators who participated in the EJSS study onto the four research questions mentioned previously:

- *Profile of Educators:* Who are the educators that teach in Jewish day and complementary schools?
- *Motivation:* What led them to a career in Jewish education?
- *Satisfaction and Career Perspectives:* How do they perceive their current positions?
- *Retention of Educators:* What factors influence their decisions to remain in the field?

The report introduces the reader to the educators by presenting a snapshot of who they are and where they are teaching. This introduction to the educators includes demographic information, such as age and gender, country of origin and denominational affiliation, formal academic background, Jewish educational experiences, and teachers' work experiences in the field of Jewish and general education. Because the profiles of day and complementary school educators were more similar than different, their stories are presented together in the text.

However, when the EJSS report begins to delve deeper into educators' motivations, it presents the findings for complementary school educators and day school educators separately. This shift begins toward the end of the demographic section (salary, benefits, and professional development) and continues through the rest of the report, including major sections about job satisfaction and retention. The organization of this report not only clarifies the differences between these two populations of educators, but also allows the reader to more easily follow information about educators in the setting (day or complementary school) in which s/he is most interested.

The EJSS data clarified that Jewish day school educators and complementary school educators are distinct entities. Each group and each setting is subject to its own strengths, opportunities, and challenges and each requires its own approach to policy planning and decision-making. With this in mind, the final section of the EJSS report, which addresses conclusions and policy implications for day and complementary school educators, evolves naturally from the previous discussions. Highlights of the data presented are located at the end of each section of the report.

PROFILE OF EDUCATORS:

WHO ARE THE JEWISH DAY AND COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS?

The first of JESNA's four primary learning goals for EJSS was to understand, "Who are the educators in Jewish day and complementary schools?" The following section of the EJSS findings includes a rich description of educators':

- Age and gender;
- Country of origin;
- Denominational affiliation;
- Academic and Jewish education backgrounds;
- Teaching experiences in the field (including current position);
- Salaries and benefits; and
- Professional development.

Age and Gender of Educators

The vast majority (79%) of all respondents in both Jewish day school and complementary school settings were women. Based on the data from the *Educator Survey*, women were more likely than their male counterparts to hold positions as administrators and as administrator/educators in day and complementary school settings.¹⁵

Forty-three percent (43%) of all educators who responded to this survey were 50 years of age or older. Specifically, nearly half (46%) of Jewish day school educators and 40% of complementary school teachers were age 50 or older. This progressive "graying" of Jewish educators mirrors national trends among public school educators.¹⁶ **Figure 1** presents a detailed breakdown of teachers by age and type of school setting.

Country of Origin

While more than 85% of day and complementary school educators were raised mostly in the United States until they were 18 years old, almost 9% of day and complementary school teachers reported that Israel was their county of origin. In both groups, less than one percent (<1%) reported they were raised in the former Soviet Union. Of the remaining educators, 5% or less indicated they were raised in still another country.

Denominational Affiliation

The *Educator Survey* asked teachers to identify their personal denominational affiliations. Most complementary school teachers identified as Reform (36%) or Conservative (34%). Nine percent (9%) said they were "Just Jewish" and 9% were Orthodox. Among day school educators, most identified as Conservative (32%), Orthodox (23%), and Reform (14%). Eight percent (8%) of all of the educators surveyed identified themselves as "Not Jewish" and all but two of these taught in Jewish day schools. Most who indicated they were "Not Jewish" were general studies teachers in Jewish day schools, while some were school administrators and a few were special personnel (e.g., guidance counselor, arts instructor).

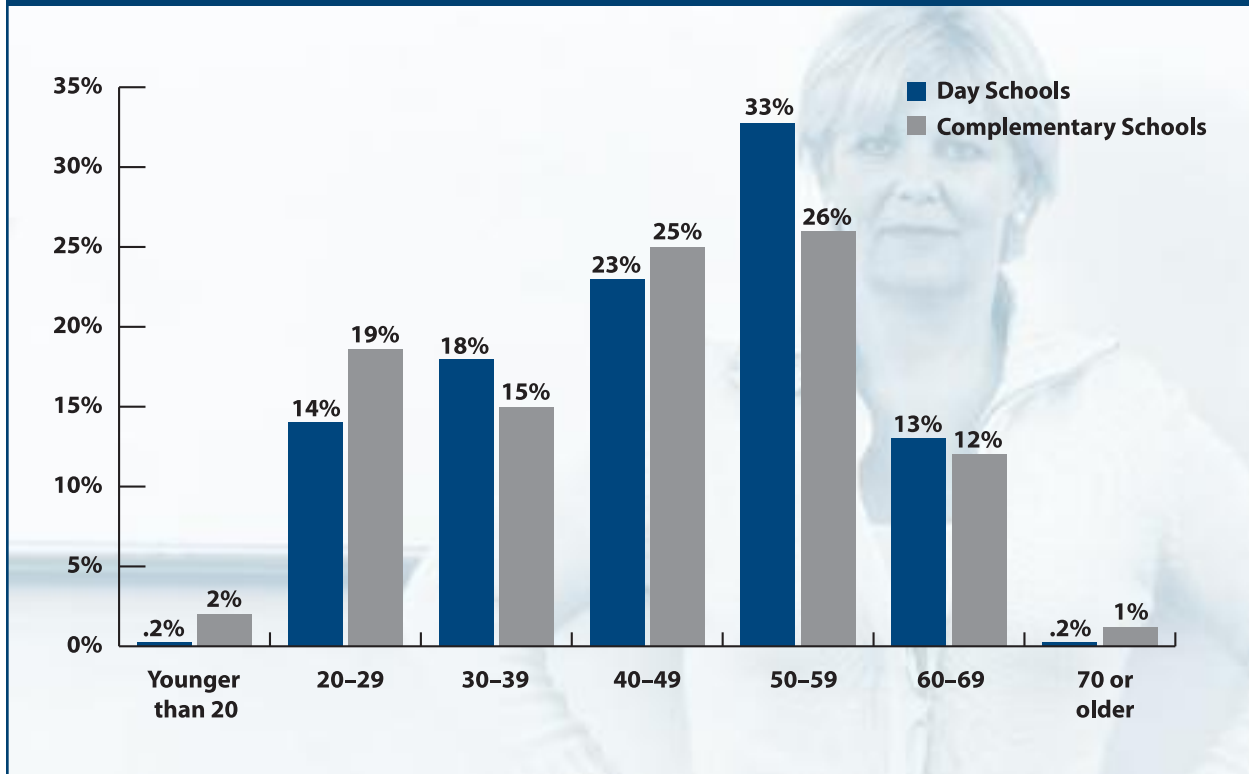
Formal Academic Background

Overall, day and complementary school educators were "highly degreed," but lacked teaching certification. More than 80% of the total number of respondents reported that they hold a bachelor's or master's degree. More than half of educators

¹⁵ Marvin Schick. (2007.) *A Survey of Day School Principals in the United States*. (New York: The Avi Chai Foundation). "Nearly 60% of the men who are principals serve in Orthodox schools, while among the women, nearly 80% are in non-Orthodox schools. Another way to look at the data is the gender distribution by type of school. In Orthodox institutions, more than three-fourths of the principals are men. Likely, the women serve mainly in all-girls schools or in the girls divisions of Orthodox schools that have separate boys/girls divisions. In non-Orthodox schools, the pattern is reversed, with 60% of the principals being women."

¹⁶ National Educator's Association (Retrieved on November 5, 2007, from <http://www.nea.org>). "A historic turnover is taking place in the teaching profession. While student enrollments are rising rapidly, more than a million veteran teachers are nearing retirement. Experts predict that overall we will need more than two million new teachers in the next decade."

FIGURE 1. BREAKDOWN OF DAY AND COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS BY AGE



teaching in Jewish day schools (55%) and just less than half of complementary school educators (47%) earned a degree beyond a B.A. A small minority of respondents had only high school diplomas, only an associate’s degree, or held a doctorate or other advanced degree. A higher percentage of complementary school educators (10%) than day school educators (3%) had only a high school diploma. Older educators were more likely than

their younger colleagues to hold advanced degrees, (i.e., master’s degree, doctoral degrees, or other degrees). Thirty-one percent (31%) of complementary school educators and 56% of day school educators responding to the survey reported that they hold a valid, non-emergency teaching certification recognized by the state or province in which they teach.¹⁷

¹⁷ Teacher Support Network. (Retrieved on November 4, 2007, from <http://www.teacherssupportnetwork.com>). A teaching credential is the license conferred by a state to teachers who have completed certain state mandated requirements for teaching certification, such as education courses and teaching examinations. Teachers may earn a credential that allows them to teach in early childhood grades (usually nursery school through grade three); elementary grades (grades one through six or eight); middle grades (grades five through eight); a secondary education subject area (usually grades seven through 12); or a special subject, such as reading or music (usually grades kindergarten through 12). Because of critical teacher shortages, some states extend temporary and emergency licenses that bypass state licensing requirements. These often are granted to individuals to teach in high-need subject areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, or bilingual education, or for high-need geographic areas, such as urban schools. Further research is needed to explore fully the extent to which Jewish teaching credentials are required by the schools and held by practicing teachers. For more information, visit The National Board of License at <http://www.nationalboardoflicense.org>.

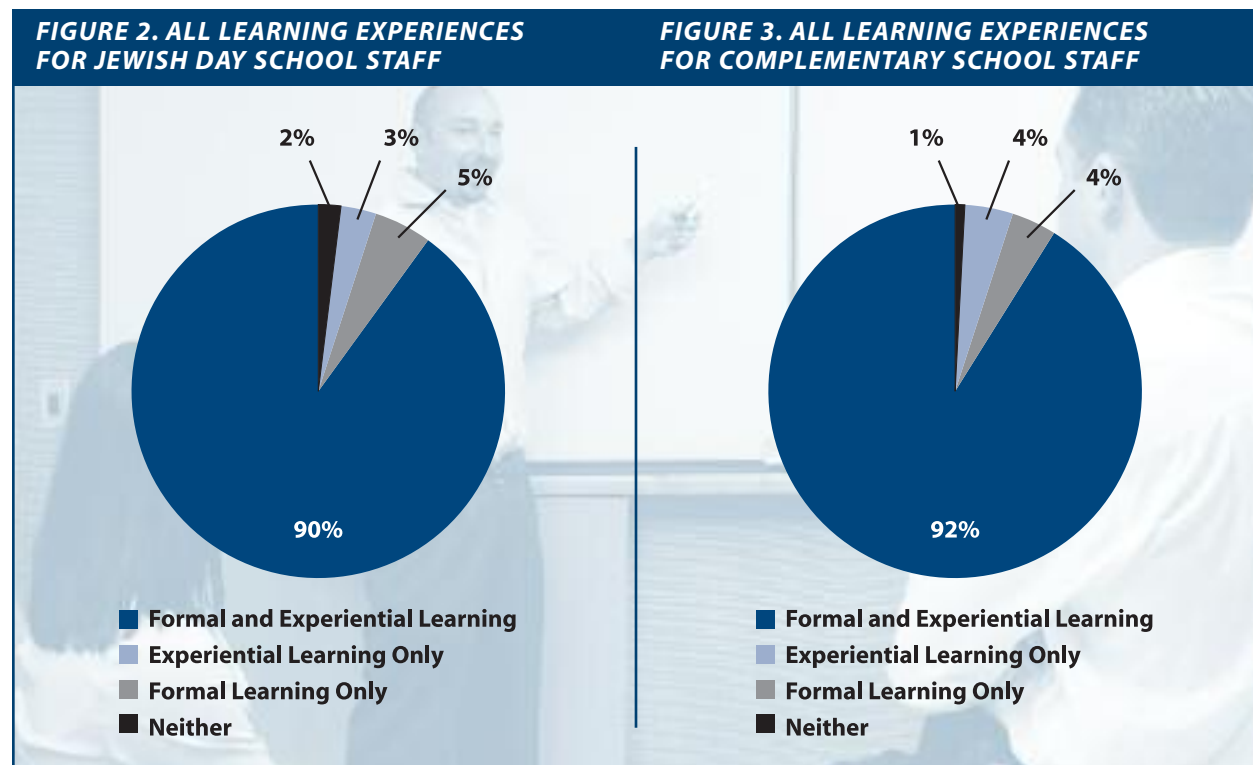
Formal and Informal Jewish Educational Experiences

Many Jewish educators who responded to the *Educator Survey* participated in formal and informal Jewish educational experiences. Ninety-two percent (92%) of Jewish respondents had both some formal and informal Jewish education; only 5% of Jewish respondents had no formal Jewish educational experience at all.¹⁸ Forty-four percent (44%) of Jewish respondents credited their formal or informal Jewish educational experiences with influencing their entry into the field of Jewish education.¹⁹

In order to better understand the types of educational experiences in which teachers engaged as learners, EJSS researchers categorized their educational opportunities as formal learning

experiences (e.g., Jewish day school, complementary Jewish school, Jewish/Hebrew academic courses, adult education classes, etc.) and informal or experiential learning experiences (e.g., Jewish camp or youth movement, organized Israel experience, *b'nai mitzvah*, conversion program, etc.).²⁰ There was little variation when these data about Jewish educational experiences were analyzed according to the type of school in which the educator was teaching.

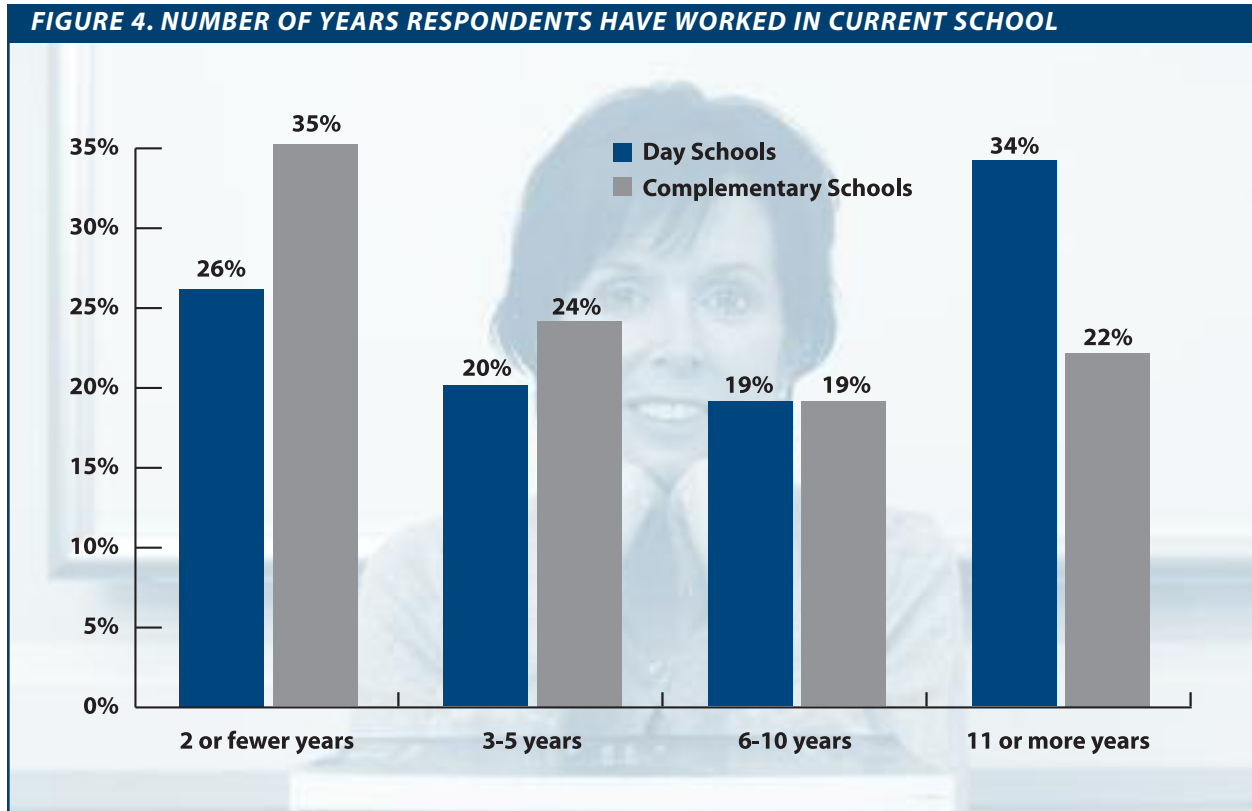
Of those educators in the EJSS sample, **Figures 2 and 3** show the percentage of educators in Jewish day and complementary schools who participated in formal Jewish education, experiential Jewish education, both forms of learning, and neither types of learning.



¹⁸ Data on all formal educational experiences are missing for 7% of Jewish respondents and data on all experiential educational experiences are missing for 8% of Jewish respondents.

¹⁹ Data are missing for 8% of respondents.

²⁰ The field of Jewish education acknowledges that these categories are fluid and imperfect. Depending on the respondent's perspective, an educational activity may fall into either, neither, or both categories.



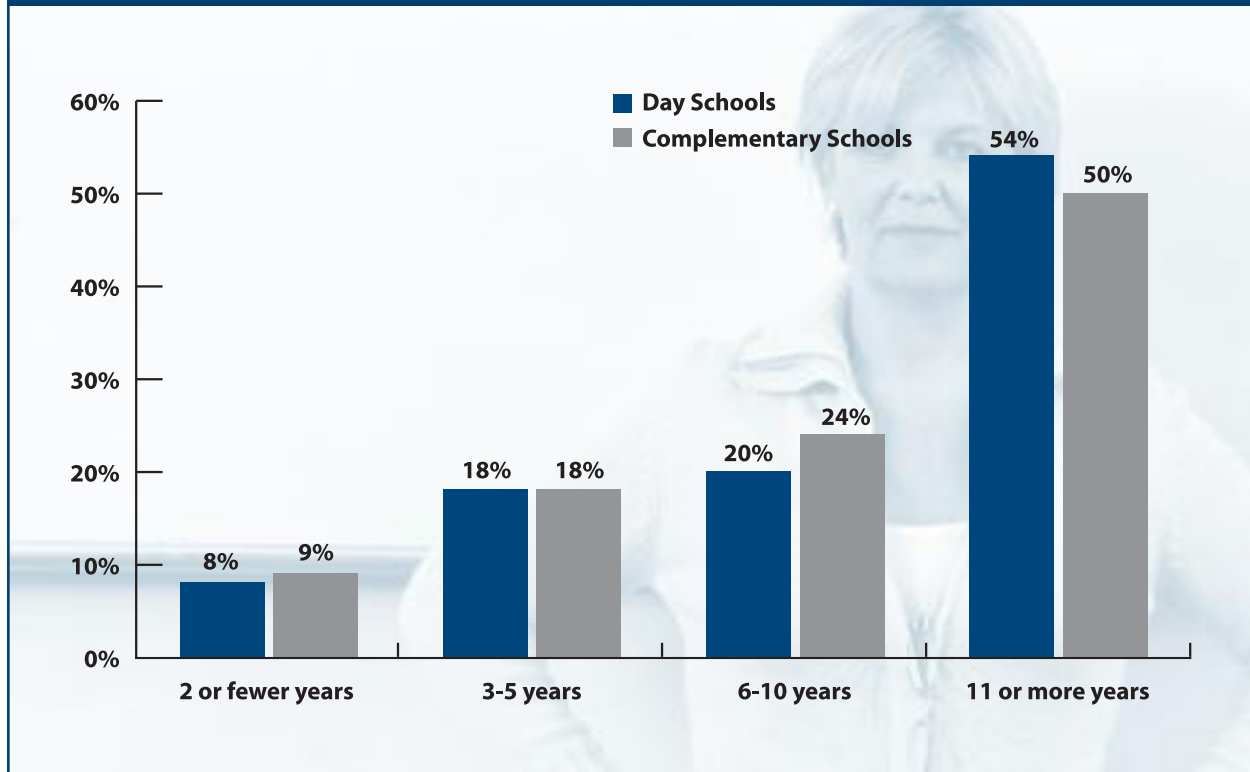
A number of other studies have demonstrated that Jewish education/involvement begets more Jewish education/involvement. That is, the more and the greater variety of Jewish educational experiences — formal and informal — in which a person engages, the more likely s/he is to be engaged in the life of the Jewish community. For example, a recent study sponsored by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation found that, “There is...a significant difference in the level of Jewish education received by those choosing Jewish careers compared to those who are not. ...A similar pattern emerges when surveying the participants on their

involvement with informal Jewish education. The respondents fit the picture of ‘the more, the more’ — the more Jewish educational experiences, formal and informal, the greater the connection to Jewish life then and later in life.”²¹

Educators’ Total Experiences in Teaching

It is important to note that a sizeable percentage of EJSS respondents were new to their schools. As detailed in **Figure 4**, 26% of day school educators and 35% of complementary school teachers who responded to the *Educator Survey* had been working

²¹ Eli Schaap and Roberta Louis Goodman. (2006). *Recruitment of College Students to the Field of Jewish Education: a study of the CAJE Schusterman College program alumni (1990–2003)*. (New York: CAJE). See also United Jewish Communities. (2003; Updated January 2004). *The National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population*. (New York: The United Jewish Communities) and Sylvia Barack Fishman in Haaretz.com (May 14, 2006). Retrieved on December 19, 2007, from <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/rosnerGuest.jhtml?itemNo=715758>.

FIGURE 5. EDUCATORS' PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES TEACHING IN JEWISH SCHOOLS

in their positions at their current schools for two or fewer years. On the other end of the spectrum, 22% of complementary school educators and 34% of Jewish day schools educators had been working in their current schools for more than 10 years.

The majority of educators who responded to the *EJSS Educator Survey* had teaching experience in Jewish educational settings other than their current positions (see **Figure 5**). The vast majority of teachers responding to the *Educator Survey* had

taught in Jewish schools for more than one year (88% of complementary and 90% of day school educators).

Overall, nearly half (45%) of responding educators had some (current or previous) experience teaching in public schools for one or more years.²²

With respect to private schools that are not Jewish, nearly one-quarter (22%) of educators reported teaching in these settings for one or more years.²³

²² Of *Educator Survey* respondents, 209 skipped this question and are not included in this analysis. Based on the data available, researchers could not ascertain whether respondents skipped this question because it did not pertain to them or for another reason.

²³ Three hundred forty-five (345) *Educator Survey* respondents skipped this question and are not included in the analysis. As in the case above, researchers cannot determine why respondents skipped this question.

The majority of those categorized as “new” teachers (those working in their current schools for fewer than two years) do not have one year or more of experience in public schools or private schools that are not Jewish. EJSS data showed that at least half of these new teachers are not only new to their current schools, but also have relatively little teaching experience in other formal educational settings. For example, just under half of the new teachers reported that they had taught in Jewish schools for three or more years. One-third of them had taught in public schools for one year or more and 19% had taught in private schools that are not Jewish for one year or more.

Educators Working in Multiple Schools

According to data from the EJSS *Educator Survey*, just over half of day school educators (56%) and just over one-third of complementary school educators (36%) had worked only in their current school during the past year.²⁴ Complementary school educators were more likely than their day school colleagues to have maintained (or to currently maintain) multiple jobs, including positions in one or more other complementary schools (30%), one or more public schools (20%), and/or one or more informal Jewish educational settings (18%). The 45% of day school educators who currently hold or who have held more than one position in the last 12 months were most likely to have worked in one or more complementary

schools (16%), one or more informal Jewish education settings (14%), and/or one or more Jewish day schools or *yeshivot* (14%).

Hours Worked by Day and Complementary School Teachers

In keeping with expectations, Jewish day school educators worked more hours overall at their schools than did complementary school educators. As shown in **Figure 6**, the greatest percentage of day school teachers reported they worked more than 31 hours per week, and approximately one-third said they worked up to 30 hours per week. Ninety-two percent (92%) of complementary school teachers worked 20 or fewer hours per week in their schools. Only 8% reported that they worked 31 or more hours per week in their primary school setting (that is, the school in which the educators were working when they completed the survey).

Educators' Current Salary Data

The EJSS data showed a wide variation in salaries (see **Figure 7**) among educators in Jewish day schools and among those working in complementary schools.²⁵ Moreover, as expected, educators' salaries varied in proportion to the hours they worked.

EJSS showed a relationship between the numbers of hours educators worked and the type of school in which they were teaching at the time of the

²⁴ Data are missing for 5% of complementary school respondents and 10% of day school respondents regarding concurrent work at other schools.

²⁵ It also revealed that a very small fraction of both Jewish day school and complementary school educators (three of the day school teachers and 19 of the complementary school teachers who responded) are not compensated in salary for their work.

FIGURE 6. HOURS WORKED BY DAY AND COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

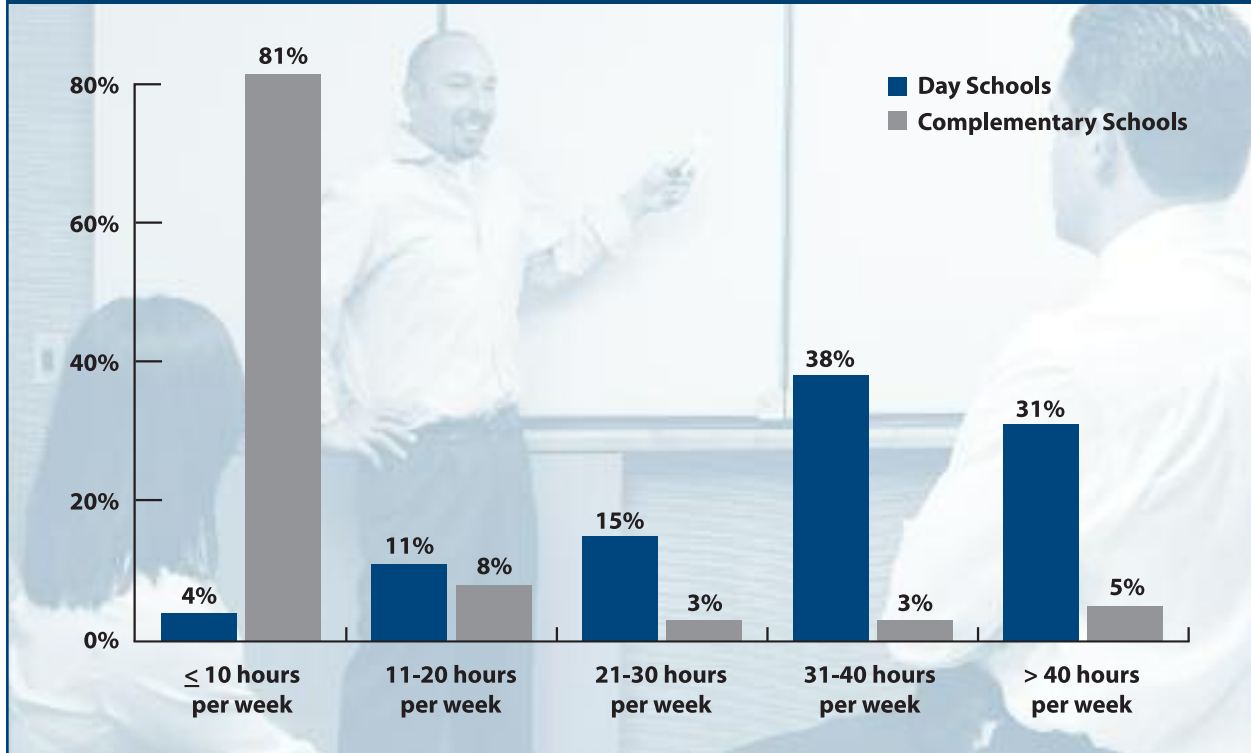


FIGURE 7. FULL-TIME DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS BY ANNUAL SALARY



survey. As expected, day school educators tended to work a greater number of hours per week than complementary school educators. For both groups of educators (those who worked 30 hours or fewer per week and those who worked 31 or more hours per week), the range of salaries covered a wide spectrum, from educators who were not compensated for their work to a small minority of educators who earned more than \$70,000 annually.

The *Educator Survey* asked teachers about the relative importance of the salary they earned in their primary school settings to their total household income. For the group of educators as a whole, men were more likely than women to report that their income from this school was the main source of household income. However, the role that salary plays in educators' decisions about whether to stay in the field is quite complex and will be explored in greater detail later in the EJSS report.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Of those complementary school educators who worked 30 or fewer hours per week, 59% reported a salary range less than \$5,000 — the most frequently reported salary range for this group. A majority of complementary school teachers (59%) reported that their principal Jewish education job was not an important or main source of household income. Forty-one percent (41%) of complementary school educators said their salary was insignificant in terms of contributing to their total household income.

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Among day school educators who worked more than 30 hours per week, the most frequently

reported range of salaries was \$40,000–\$49,999 (reported by 22% of respondents). One-quarter of the educators who reported working 30 or fewer hours per week most frequently cited salaries in the \$20,000–\$29,999 range. The vast majority of day school educators (89%) said their current, main Jewish education job was an important or principal source of household income and only 11% said their salary was insignificant in this way.

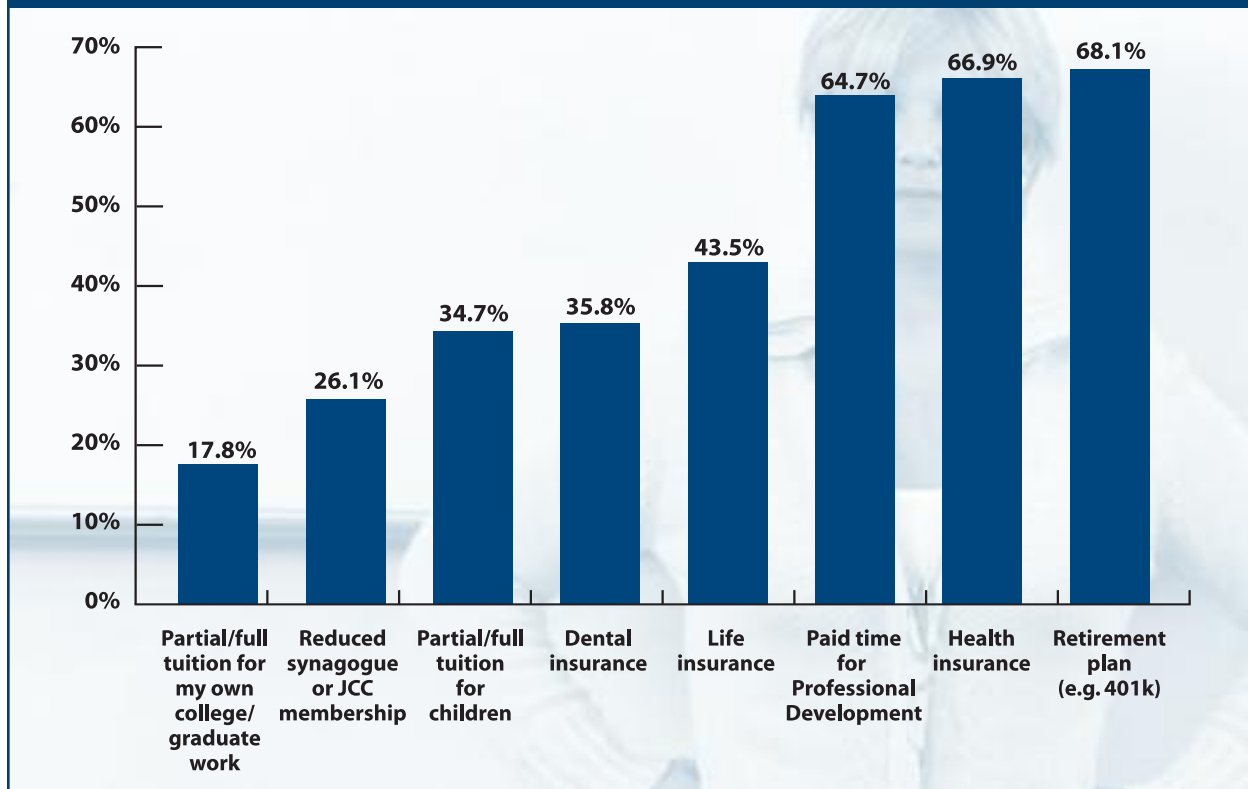
Benefits

The *Educator Survey* asked respondents about 10 types of employment-related benefits they might receive from their current school (see [Figure 8](#)).²⁶ Except for reduced synagogue/JCC membership fees, day school educators were more likely than complementary school teachers to receive all types of benefits identified in the survey. Similarly, as expected, full-time educators (those working 31 or more hours per week) were much more likely to report that they received some number of these benefits than their part-time (up to 30 hours per week) counterparts.

With the exception of paid time off for professional development (41% of part-time day and complementary school educators said they received this benefit), part-time Jewish educators received few benefits. For example, only 11% received health insurance and less than 7% received dental, life insurance, transportation or childcare reimbursement, or tuition support for their own college or graduate studies. Unlike professionals in similar full-time positions, full-time work in a Jewish day or complementary school does not guarantee that a teacher will receive benefits. For example, less than 69% of full-time Jewish

²⁶ Data are missing for individual benefits questions for between 8% and 14% of respondents.

FIGURE 8. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS' EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR DAY SCHOOL AND COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS WHO WORK 31 OR MORE HOURS PER WEEK



educators, whether in day or complementary schools, who responded to the *Educator Survey* received health insurance or a retirement plan. Less than 45% received life or dental insurance and only 35% received some type of tuition assistance for their children who attended the same school.

The need for health care benefits for teachers has been explored by several organizations. At a benefits consultation sponsored by JESNA and the Covenant Foundation in 2004, Shoshanna Sofaer and Lynne Page Snyder presented their paper, *Addressing Uninsurance Among Jewish Educators: Background Analysis and Options*.²⁷ The paper discussed the lack of health care coverage for Jewish

educators in the context of the lack of health care insurance in the United States; the specifics of the problem in the Jewish community; and options for addressing the problem. The authors stated explicitly that, “The recruitment and retention of Jewish educators is a major challenge facing the Jewish community. One factor that leads to difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified educators is that, all too often, they do not receive health insurance, for themselves and their families, as a benefit of employment.”

Also in 2004, RAVSAK: The Jewish Community Day School Network undertook a research project to explore the possibility of developing a health care

²⁷ Shoshanna Sofaer and Lynne Page Snyder. (2004). *Addressing Uninsurance Among Jewish Educators: Background Analysis and Options*. Unpublished paper. Executive Summary available at <http://www.ou.org/index.php/ylc/article/2411>.

program nationally to cover the approximately 3,000 educators teaching in its member schools.²⁸ While the research revealed that it “was not currently to [RAVSAK’s] advantage to launch a national medical/dental plan for RAVSAK’s member schools,” the organization arranged for a large benefit consultation group to provide school-specific benefits consultations at no charge to member schools in good standing.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Paid time off for professional development was the only benefit received by a sizeable number of complementary school educators (43%). Twenty-three percent (23%) received reduced membership rates at a synagogue or JCC and 14% received partial or full tuition reimbursement for children enrolled in the school. Fewer than 9% of these teachers received any other employment benefits.

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Jewish day school educators most frequently reported that their employment benefits included a retirement plan (63%), paid time off for professional development (59%), health insurance (57%), life insurance (38%), some type of tuition assistance for their children who attended the same day school (35%), and dental insurance (33%). The benefits received by 5% or fewer day school educators were partial or full reimbursement for housing expenses²⁹ and childcare.

Professional Development: Educators’ Perspectives

The critical importance of ongoing professional development as part of the culture of Jewish education and professional communal organizations is well known anecdotally and from other research in the field.³⁰ The *Educator Survey* asked teachers about their participation in professional development activities, defined as workshops, training sessions, conferences, classes, and/or seminars lasting any amount of time from less than half-a-day to multiple days.³¹

Almost all (92%) of respondents reported that they had participated in some kind of professional development activity in the last 12 months (including opportunities that lasted less than half-a-day, a full day, or more than a full day).³²

Educators were asked whether or not the professional development activities in which they participated during the past 12 months had lasted less than half-a-day, a full day, and more than a day. EJSS data indicated that among the 613 respondents who answered all three questions, educators who reported engaging in professional development activities lasting more than one day (and who did not report participating in activities of shorter durations) felt more hopeful about their ability to develop an emotionally satisfying professional career at their primary school. These same educators also were more hopeful about

²⁸ From a press release issued by RAVSAK. Retrieved on January 7, 2008, from http://www.ou.org/pdf/ylc/1831_001.pdf.

²⁹ Housing benefits (also called housing, rental, or “parsonage” allowances) are generally applicable only to ordained clergy (e.g., rabbis and cantors). A clergy person’s housing allowance is a special benefit that is excludable from gross income for income tax purposes.

³⁰ One example of how public education systems understand the critical nature of professional development for teachers is: New Jersey State Department of Education. (2001). *Standards for Required Professional Development for Teachers: A New Vision*. Retrieved December 19, 2007, from <http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/standards.htm>. Full text is available through ERIC (ED# 460082) at <http://www.eric.ed.gov>. “The New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board believes that educators must be dedicated to a continuous plan of professional development that begins with their pre-service activities, that continues with their induction into the profession, and that extends through the life of their professional career in education through on-going and sustained professional development endeavors. We further believe that effective educators are life-long learners, that professional development must be an on-going process of refining skills, inquiring into practice, and developing new methods.”

³¹ Data are missing for respondents who said they attended less than a half-day of professional development (15%), a full day (24%), and more than a full day (25%).

³² Data are missing from 7% of respondents for this item.

developing as highly skilled professional educators than were their colleagues who reported participating in professional development activities lasting one day or less.

The *Educator Survey* also asked educators whether their professional development activities took place in any of three specific milieus: distance learning, visiting another school or schools, and college or university courses. Of these, the greatest percent of respondents (28%) indicated that they had visited other schools for their professional development activities,³³ although it is unclear from the data whether this meant that they attended professional development activities in a setting other than their own (which is most likely) or observed the educational practices of educators in other schools. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents had participated in professional development through college or university courses.³⁴ Sixteen percent (16%) had participated in professional development through distance learning.³⁵ Participation rates were higher for day school educators than for complementary school educators in all three of these educational venues.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

About one-quarter (28%) of complementary school educators participated in professional development opportunities within the past 12 months that lasted more than one full day.³⁶ Among the 112 complementary school educators who reported the

specific number of times their professional development activities lasted more than one day, 45% participated in one such session, 33% participated in two or three such sessions, 13% in six or more such sessions, and 9% in four or five such sessions in the past year.

In terms of the venue in which the professional development took place, more than 10% said they participated in professional development through college or university courses,³⁷ and a similar percentage said they participated in professional development through distance learning.³⁸ Almost one-quarter visited other schools for professional development purposes.³⁹ More than 40% reported that they received paid time off for professional development.⁴⁰

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

About one-half (52%) of day school educators participated in professional development opportunities within the past 12 months that lasted more than one full day.⁴¹ Among the 251 day school educators who reported the specific number of times their professional development activities lasted more than one day, 39% participated in one such session, 33% in two or three such sessions, 16% in four or five such sessions, and 13% in six or more such sessions in the past year.

In terms of venue, one-quarter said they participated in professional development through

³³ Nine percent (9%) of respondents skipped this question.

³⁴ Eleven percent (11%) of respondents skipped this question.

³⁵ As above, 11% of respondents skipped this question.

³⁶ Response data are missing for 27% of complementary school respondents.

³⁷ Response data are missing for 10% of complementary school respondents.

³⁸ Response data are missing for 10% of complementary school respondents.

³⁹ Response data are missing for 9% of complementary school respondents.

⁴⁰ Response data are missing for 11% of complementary school respondents.

⁴¹ Response data are missing for 23% of day school respondents.

college or university courses.⁴² One-third visited other schools for professional development purposes.⁴³ Only 18% said they participated in professional development through distance learning.⁴⁴ More than half of day school educators who responded to the *Educator Survey* reported that they received paid time off for professional development.⁴⁵

Professional Development: Administrators' Perspectives

The EJSS *Administrator Survey* also addressed the issue of professional development. Some of these findings are presented here to complement the data about the educators' experiences and perspectives. The survey asked day and complementary school administrators (heads of school, principals, education directors, etc.) to report about the professional development needs of the teachers in their schools. According to the findings of the EJSS *Administrator Survey*,⁴⁶ both day and complementary school administrators perceived a strong need for professional development for their educators. Administrators in both settings said training educators to teach to multiple learning styles in their classrooms was their number one professional development need.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The sources to which complementary school administrators turned to provide professional development to meet their teachers' pressing needs included individuals within the school, the congregation's rabbi, and the local Jewish education agency/board.

Complementary school administrators listed multiple sources of funding that supported professional development for their educators, including grants from local Jewish organizations or funds, a fund at the individual school that supports professional development for educators annually, donors' gifts, and/or the rabbi's discretionary fund. In many cases, teachers paid their own ways, whether or not they received paid time off to attend the activities. Nevertheless, data from the EJSS *Administrator Survey* showed that complementary school administrators were likely to stipulate educators' attendance at professional development opportunities in their contracts.

DAY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Among the most commonly employed sources for professional development, day school administrators said they used local and national experts, individuals within the school, and faculty from secular schools of higher education.

Day school administrators reported that their professional development funding sources included grants, a line in the annual and/or regular operating budget, funding from school districts or the individual school, and funds from the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. *Administrator Survey* data revealed that day schools generally provided support (e.g., budget allocated for events and reimbursements for conference expenses) for educators' attendance at professional development events. However, as in complementary schools, many teachers paid their own expenses for professional development activities, regardless of paid time off.

⁴² Response data are missing for 11% of day school respondents.

⁴³ Response data are missing for 9% of day school respondents.

⁴⁴ Response data are missing for 12% of day school educators.

⁴⁵ Response data are missing for 12% of day school respondents.

⁴⁶ Survey respondents included a total of 27 Jewish day school administrators and 116 complementary school administrators. As mentioned previously, the small sample size of administrators means these data may not be representative of the experiences of all administrators.

HIGHLIGHTS: Profile of Educators

While there is no such thing as “the average” *Educator Survey* respondent, these are highlights of the data collected to inform the profile of educators in Jewish day and complementary schools.

Demographic Data

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of *Educator Survey* respondents were women.
- Forty-three percent (43%) were 50-years-old or older.
- Eighty-six-and-a-half percent (86.5%) were raised in the U.S.; 9% were raised in Israel.
- In their primary school settings, most day school teachers worked more than 30 hours per week; most complementary school teachers worked 10 or fewer hours per week.
- Twenty-six percent (26%) of day school and 35% of complementary school educators were new (two or fewer years) to their current schools.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) had a BA/MA.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) overall did not hold a valid teaching certificate.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) had some form of Jewish experiential and/or formal Jewish education.

Salary Data

- \$40,000–\$49,999 was the most frequently reported salary range for educators working more than 31 hours per week.
- The range of salaries was very large for both day school and complementary school educators.

- Eighty-nine percent (89%) of day school and 59% of complementary school teachers said their salaries were important to their household incomes.
- More than half of respondents disagreed that they could develop an economically rewarding professional career in Jewish education (however, 31% of day school and 18% of complementary school agreed they could accomplish this).

Benefits Data (for educators who work 31 hours or more per week)

- Approximately two-thirds received:
 - health insurance
 - retirement benefits
 - paid time off for professional development
- At least one-third, but less than 50% received:
 - life insurance
 - dental insurance
 - partial/full tuition for children

Professional Development Data

- Nearly all educators (more than 90%) said they had participated in professional development activities in the last 12 months.
- Professional development activities reported by teachers included workshops, university courses, distance learning, and professional development activities at other schools (simply as a site of professional development activities or for purposes of observation).

Questions for Additional Research

- What are the impacts of the overwhelmingly female face of Jewish educators on variables such as salary, professional longevity, career trajectory, and the population of role models for students in Jewish schools?
- What is the relationship, if any, between an educator’s personal denominational affiliation and the denomination of the school in which s/he teaches?
- How are the fields of study in which teachers focused their formal academic learning relevant to their current positions as Jewish educators?
- What are the configurations of employment for the unexpectedly large percentage of teachers holding multiple concurrent positions and why are they employed in more than one setting?
- To what extent are educators who rely on their teaching salaries as a main source of household income likely to prioritize salary as a critical consideration when deciding whether and for how long they will stay in the field?
- What can we learn about the content, quality, and extensiveness of these educators’ professional development and the effect of these experiences on classroom excellence?
- Under whose auspices are these professional development opportunities offered? What are the relative benefits of (and educators’ preferences for) the venues in which they are conducted?
- How do day and complementary school teachers assess their own professional development needs?

MOTIVATION:

WHAT LED THEM TO A CAREER IN JEWISH EDUCATION?

The *Educator Survey* asked teachers about influential Jewish educational experiences and individuals who encouraged them. These findings highlight the people and events that influenced many educators' decisions to enter their current positions in Jewish day and complementary schools and shed light on the motivators that led many to choose their current job as the place to make their mark in Jewish education.

Motivation: Influence of Individuals on Jewish Educators

The EJSS *Educator Survey* asked educators about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "This job is part of a career path that I have planned." The data showed that 29% of all respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they came to their current jobs as part of an explicitly planned career path. Forty-eight percent (48%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "this job is part of a career path that I have planned" and nearly one-quarter neither agreed nor disagreed. How then, did these educators find their ways into the field?

Many educators (51% of Jewish complementary school and 37% of Jewish day school respondents) who had some Jewish educational experience as learners, indicated that their participation in a Jewish formal or informal educational program was particularly influential on their decision to enter the field of Jewish education. When asked which type of Jewish educational program was particularly influential, the most frequently cited experiences included camp (more than 22%) and informal education, such as youth groups (more than 15%). As expected, complementary school educators (18%) reported that their own complementary

school experiences were influential, as did 11% of day school teachers. Likewise, day school teachers (13%) were influenced by their day school experiences, as were 7% of complementary school educators. Also cited were university/college programs (7%) and Israel experiences (6%). A handful (3%) of respondents mentioned *yeshiva*,⁴⁷ synagogue involvement, work experience, and adult education.

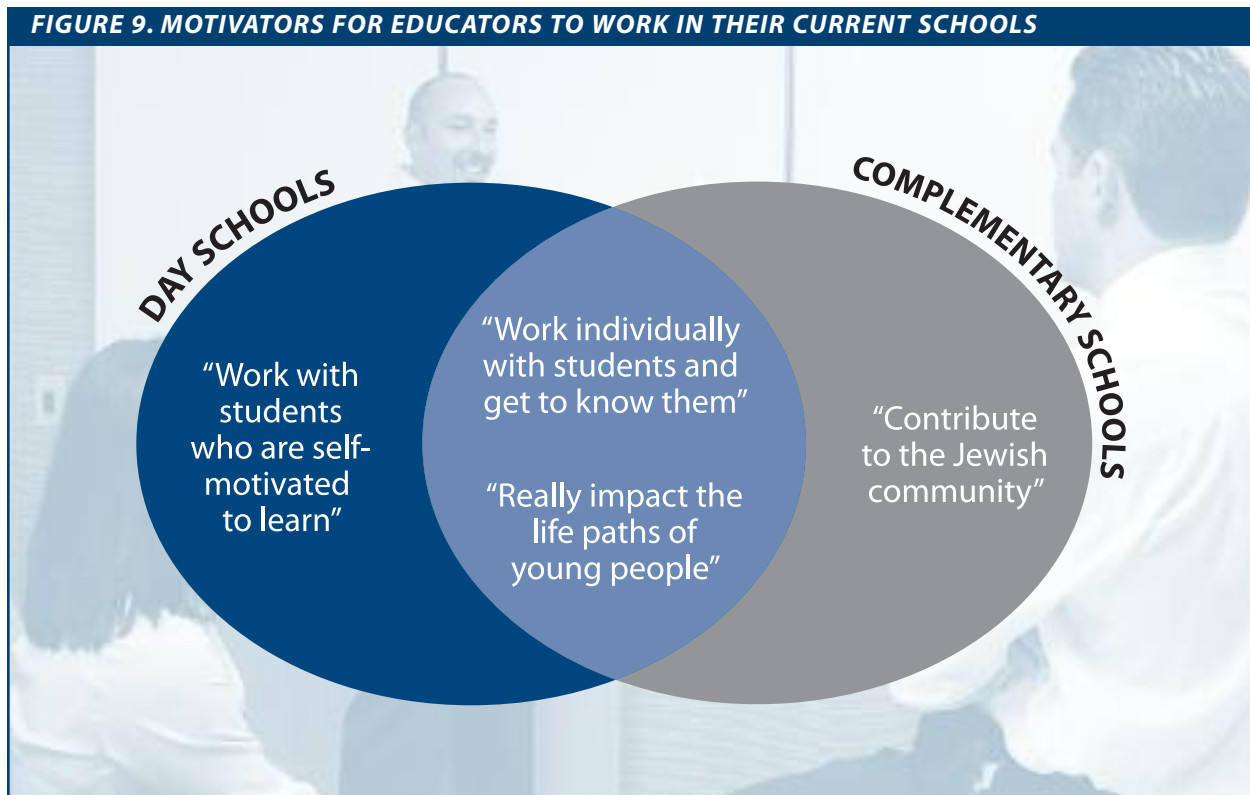
In addition to their own Jewish educational experiences, nearly 36% of day and 58% of complementary school educators reported that the influence of one person (usually a Jewish communal or educational professional) inspired and/or motivated them to enter the field of Jewish education. Respondents most commonly reported these individuals were school administrators (28%), teachers (25%), and Jewish communal leaders (including clergy) (21%). Thirteen percent (13%) said "family" motivated them. These findings imply that there may be a benefit to using these influential individuals and/or mentors in a more purposeful way to attract promising educators to the field of Jewish education.

These findings indicated that "tapping" or encouraging individuals to enter the field of Jewish education was a key motivator for Jewish day and complementary school educators, both for those who had planned this career and for those who did not consider their job to be part of a planned career path.

Motivation: Other Factors

In addition to influential Jewish educational experiences and the encouragement of individuals, day and complementary school educators cited a range of other factors that motivated them to work

⁴⁷ *Yeshiva* may refer either to post-high school or to earlier *yeshiva* day school.



at their current schools. Educators were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with 10 statements about their motivation to work at their current schools. Across the board, day and complementary school educators (94% and 93%, respectively) said they were most highly motivated to work in a Jewish school “to really impact the life paths of young people.” Both groups of teachers also were motivated by the opportunity to work individually with students and get to know them well. Further:

- Seventy-six percent (76%) of day school educators reported that the desire to work with students who are self-motivated to learn led them to their current schools.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of complementary school educators selected their current schools

because they wanted to contribute to the Jewish community.

Other motivators varied depending on whether teachers worked in day or complementary school settings. **Figure 9** illustrates the similarities and differences between the most common motivators among day and complementary school educators.

There were a few particularly Jewish motivational factors that proved influential for many EJSS respondents, but even more so for those who identified as Jewish. Overall, **Table 2** shows the mean scores for Jewish, relational, and convenience factors that responding day and complementary educators said motivated them to work in their current schools. The table shows high mean scores for particularly Jewish factors, even though educators who were not Jewish were included.

TABLE 2. 10 MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR ALL DAY AND COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

		Percent (%) by Agreement			
<i>I was motivated to work at this school...</i>		Mean Rating	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
1.	To really impact the life paths of young people.	4.5	2.0%	4.5%	93.5%
2.	To work individually with students and get to know them well.	4.2	3.2%	13.2%	83.6%
3.	To contribute to the Jewish community.	4.0	8.6%	15.0%	76.4%
4.	To work with students who are self-motivated to learn.	3.9	6.6%	23.7%	69.7%
5.	Because of the compatibility of working here and living a Jewish life.	3.9	10.9%	19.3%	69.9%
6.	To work in a place where the adults feel they matter.	3.9	6.9%	24.8%	68.3%
7.	To work in a place in which I would have much in common with many of the staff members.	3.7	14.0%	24.3%	61.7%
8.	Because the school needed to fill an opening and looked to me.	3.6	20.3%	18.6%	61.2%
9.	To give myself an opportunity to strengthen my own religious identity.	3.5	21.1%	24.2%	54.7%
10.	Because this school has a strong education/school committee.	3.3	20.4%	37.8%	41.8%

Rating is on a scale of one through five where 1=“strongly disagree” and 5 =“strongly agree.” Percents may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Among day school teachers who identified as Jewish, the three motivators most frequently cited as leading them to work in their current day school settings were:

1. Compatibility of working in a Jewish school and living a Jewish life (75% agreed or strongly agreed);
2. Contributing to the Jewish community (75% agreed or strongly agreed); and
3. Opportunity to strengthen one’s own religious identity (49% agreed or strongly agreed).

HIGHLIGHTS: Motivation

One may infer that an educator's motivation to become a teacher in a day or complementary school setting likely mirrors his or her motivation to enter the field. Furthermore, the considerations that an educator feels to be important for selecting a school in which to teach may correspond to issues an educator perceives are important for deciding whether to remain in or to leave the field.

- More than half of the day and complementary school respondents did NOT plan the career in Jewish education in which they find themselves today.
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of day school teachers and 58% of complementary school teachers reported that the influence of an individual (administrator, teacher, clergy, etc.) led them into the field.
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of day school teachers and 59% of complementary school teachers indicated that their past Jewish educational experiences as learners influenced their decisions to become Jewish educators.
- More than 92% of day and complementary school educators reported that they were most highly motivated to work in a Jewish school "to really impact the life paths of young people."
- Seventy-six percent (76%) of day school teachers desired to work with students who are self-motivated.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of complementary school teachers desired to contribute to the Jewish community.

Questions for Additional Research

- What attracts the "the best and the brightest" to the field of Jewish education?
- In what venues and at what times are potential Jewish educators most open to the influence of individuals?
- Which types of Jewish educational experiences are most likely to tap into educators' intrinsic motivators to channel their skills and passion into Jewish schools?
- What is the relationship between highly motivated educators and excellence in the classroom?

SATISFACTION AND CAREER PERSPECTIVES:

HOW DO THEY PERCEIVE THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS?

The third question guiding JESNA's analysis of the EJSS data was, "How do Jewish day and complementary school educators perceive their current positions?" This question came from the desire to unpack the elements that might lead to educators' satisfaction in their current positions and the considerations they might evaluate when thinking about the future of their careers in Jewish education. This issue is related to educator retention, which is discussed in detail in the next section of the EJSS report. By considering multiple facets of these variables, it may be possible to discover aspects of the job that Jewish educational leaders have the power to change, and in so doing, shape the corps of educators they recruit and retain in Jewish day and complementary schools.

Indicators of Job Satisfaction

EJSS data revealed that in general, Jewish day and complementary school educators were satisfied with their work in the field. The *Educator Survey* asked teachers how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement "I am satisfied with my job at this school" using a strongly disagree to strongly agree scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree). The vast majority of educators overall (83% day school and 84% complementary school) agreed with this statement. That is, they expressed a relatively high level of job satisfaction. Over 70% of Jewish school educators agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Compared with careers of other people my age and gender, I have a good career." More than half of educators surveyed also agreed or strongly agreed that "There are opportunities for me to develop an emotionally satisfying professional career at this school." The EJSS data also showed congruence between educators' job satisfaction ratings and whether or not they felt their efforts were validated and/or recognized by administrators, colleagues, parents, and students.

Empirical and anecdotal evidence from the field of general education indicates that educators often experience feelings of isolation and/or loneliness in their teaching settings, which may lead them to leave the field. The *Educator Survey* asked teachers about the degree to which they agreed with statements that described the collaborative nature of their current jobs in their respective school settings. More than half of day school educators (56%) and slightly less than half (45%) of those in complementary schools agreed that they spent a great deal of time and effort learning from each other and sharing effective teaching practices. Specifically, these day and complementary school teachers agreed that they:

- Reflected together on teaching practices and/or the curriculum (49% of day school and 45% of complementary school educators);
- Co-developed ideas, materials, and/or lesson plans with colleagues (52% of day school and 38% of complementary school educators); and
- Established shared understandings about how to define success for their students (59% of day school and 38% of complementary school educators).

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Nearly two-thirds of complementary school educators agreed that they had a good career, compared with their peers of the same age and gender. More than half (57%) reported that in their current positions, they had opportunities to develop emotionally satisfying careers.

Using the strongly disagree to strongly agree scale noted above, complementary school educators overall agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced validation and/or recognition by key stakeholders, particularly by parents (77%), colleagues (81%), administrators (86%), and students (74%). Relationships with colleagues emerged again when 54% of complementary school

educators indicated their agreement with the statement, “I am satisfied with the level of teamwork among the faculty.”

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Responding to the same scale, day school educators agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced validation and/or recognition by students (83%), parents (81%), colleagues (85%), and administrators (81%). About three-quarters (76%) of these teachers agreed that “Compared with careers of other people my age and gender, I have a good career” and 78% perceived that there were possibilities for them to develop emotionally satisfying careers at their current jobs.

Collegial relationships and the ability to work collaboratively with fellow teachers also may have contributed to teacher satisfaction. For example, about half of day school teachers felt they frequently developed ideas/materials with colleagues or met with other teachers to establish definitions of student success. Sixty percent (60%) of day school educators agreed with the statement, “I am satisfied with the level of teamwork among the faculty.”

Teachers’ Perspectives on their Futures in Jewish Education

When asked whether they would describe themselves as having a “career in Jewish education,” EJSS data revealed that the more hours teachers worked per week, the more they agreed with this statement. That is, high percentages of educators who worked 31 or more hours per week in both day school and complementary school settings agreed with the statement. As expected, a lower percentage of respondents who worked 10 or fewer hours per week viewed their current work as a “career in Jewish education.”

There is a statistically significant association between teachers’ ages and whether they

envisioned spending the rest of their careers in Jewish education. Half of day and complementary school respondents who said they envisioned spending the rest of their careers in Jewish education were 50-years-old or older and 23% were between the ages of 40 and 49. The sharp decline in “yes” responses continued among younger teachers ages 30 to 39 (15%) and those 29-years-old or younger (12%). This split has implications for an impending shortage of Jewish day and complementary school teachers.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Sixty percent (60%) of complementary school teachers agreed with the statement “I would describe myself as having a career in Jewish education.” Moreover, 93% of the small minority of complementary school educators who worked 31 hours or more per week agreed with this statement. Even so, the majority (54%) of teachers who worked 10 or fewer hours per week (which included the bulk of complementary school educators) also viewed their current work as a “career in Jewish education.” With regard to future retention in the field, nearly two-thirds of complementary school educators said they envisioned spending the rest of their careers in Jewish education. However, 31% of complementary school educators agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I can imagine myself leaving the field of Jewish education in the next several years.”

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of day school respondents described themselves as having a career in Jewish education. Most day school educators (69%) who worked 31 or more hours per week agreed with this statement. A lower percent of respondents who worked 10 or fewer hours per week (41%) viewed their current work as a “career in Jewish education.” Almost three-quarters of day school educators who responded to

the *Educator Survey* affirmed that they planned to spend the rest of their careers in Jewish education. However, slightly more than one-third indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they could imagine leaving the field of Jewish education in the next several years.

Would Teachers Choose Jewish Education Again?

Job satisfaction also may be gauged by whether educators would “do it all again” if the professional slate were wiped clean. In response to the survey statement, “If I could start over again, I would certainly become an educator in a Jewish school,” the greatest percentage of day and complementary school educators (38% of all respondents) said they “would certainly become an educator in a Jewish school,” while just over one-quarter of educators in each setting said they “probably” would again become an educator in a Jewish school. Among day school respondents, age was not related to attitudes about once again pursuing this career. However, older complementary school educators were more likely than their younger counterparts to express greater certainty that they would become educators in a Jewish school if they could start over again.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Just over 80% of complementary school educators agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “If I knew at the outset what I know now about my current job, I would still choose it.” Nearly one-quarter of these teachers reported that if they could start over again, they would have an “even chance” of becoming educators in Jewish schools. Eight percent (8%) said they probably or certainly would *not* become educators in a Jewish school.

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Among day school educators, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that knowing what they know now,

they would choose to be Jewish educators in their current positions again. While almost one-third reported they would have an “even chance” of choosing this career again, 9% of teachers said they “probably or certainly” *would not* become educators in a Jewish school.

Administrators’ Perspectives on Staffing Needs of Jewish Day and Complementary Schools

Just as teachers speculate upon their futures in Jewish education, so do administrators consider the types of educators they need in their schools. The issue of “perceived scarcity” — not only securing the optimal number of educators, but specifically identifying and recruiting fully qualified educators — is an issue of paramount importance not only in Jewish schools, but also in American private and public schools. The *EJSS Administrator Survey* asked about approaches administrators used to fill teaching vacancies during the 2006 school year. The survey presented eight specific strategies and respondents were asked to check all that applied:

1. Hired a fully qualified educator
2. Hired a less-than-fully qualified educator
3. Added sections to other educators’ loads
4. Assigned educator of another subject or grade level
5. Assigned administrator or counselor to teach
6. Used long or short-term substitute
7. Expanded some class sizes
8. Cancelled planned course offerings

For the purposes of data analysis, any option that day and complementary administrators employed other than strategy number one (hiring a fully qualified educator) was designated a “suboptimal strategy” (i.e., strategies 2-8). When an administrator chose any suboptimal strategy, the

situation was characterized as a “perceived scarcity of educators.”

To get a better sense of the extent of the perceived scarcity of educators among these administrators, researchers examined the number of instances when administrators reported a scarcity of teachers relative to the total number of instances with any open positions in the schools that responded to the *Administrator Survey*. Scarcity was identified when (1) a fully qualified educator was not hired for an open position and (2) when multiple positions were open in a single school and any one of those positions was not filled by a fully qualified teacher. The analyses presented here do not focus on situations in which there were no vacancies. Scarcity data below are reported separately for day school and complementary school administrators.

The EJSS *Administrator Survey* asked administrators about open positions in six categories. This report focuses on three categories of teachers because they are common to both Jewish day and complementary schools: Judaic studies only, Hebrew language only, and both Judaic studies and Hebrew language.⁴⁸

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

A majority of complementary school administrators perceived a scarcity of Judaic studies and/or Hebrew language educators.⁴⁹ In total, 102 complementary school administrators reported open position(s) during the 2006 school year. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of these complementary school administrators indicated that they resorted to suboptimal strategies to address at least some of their teaching vacancies. These included 43 of the 63 administrators who had openings for Judaic studies teachers; 44 of the 58 administrators who had openings for Hebrew teachers; and 47 of the 69 administrators who had openings for combined Judaic studies/Hebrew language teachers in the 2006 school year.

DAY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Overall, 23 day school administrators reported open Judaic studies, Hebrew language, and combined Judaic studies/Hebrew language positions during the 2006 school year.⁵⁰ A majority (61%) of these administrators chose suboptimal strategies to address at least some of these vacancies. These included 10 of the 16 day school

⁴⁸ The remaining three categories constitute educators in general studies only, integrated (general and Judaic studies), and “special area” studies (e.g., music, art).

⁴⁹ For complementary school administrators, data are missing for 10% of Judaic studies positions, 9% of Hebrew language positions, and 11% of combined Judaic studies/Hebrew language positions.

⁵⁰ For day school administrators, data are missing for 11% of combined Judaic studies/Hebrew language positions and 7% of Hebrew language positions.

administrators who had openings for Judaic studies teachers, eight of the 12 who had openings for Hebrew teachers, and eight of the 14 who had openings for combined Judaic studies/Hebrew language teachers.

Administrators' Perspectives on Recruiting Fully Qualified Educators

Leaders in the field of Jewish education recognize the need to better understand the needs and priorities of the administrators and heads of school who recruit, train, and sustain Jewish educators.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Half of complementary school administrators who participated in the EJSS registry reported that they

had difficulty⁵¹ finding fully qualified staff. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of complementary school administrators reported that this task was neither difficult nor easy and 23% found it not at all difficult.

DAY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Data from the EJSS registry indicated that 45% of the Jewish day school administrators had difficulty⁵² finding Judaic studies teachers. Thirty percent (30%) found this task was not difficult and one-quarter reported it was neither difficult nor easy to hire Judaic studies teachers. Thirty-five percent (35%) of administrators included in the registry reported difficulty finding general studies teachers, while 36% found it neither difficult nor easy, and 29% reported that hiring general studies teachers for their day school was not at all difficult.

⁵¹ "Difficulty" is defined as a mean rating of a "4" or a "5" on a one to five scale where 1 = "not at all difficult," 3 = "neither difficult nor easy," and 5 = "very difficult."

⁵² Using the same one to five scale detailed in the previous footnote.

HIGHLIGHTS: Satisfaction and Career Perspectives

Most Jewish day and complementary educators are satisfied in their current positions, but that does not guarantee that they perceive themselves staying in the field over the long-term.

Job Satisfaction

- Over 80% of educators reported overall job satisfaction.
- Seventy percent (70%) believed they had a good career compared with people of their same age and gender.
- Overall, 75% of educators reported they experienced validation from colleagues, administrators, and families.
- Over 75% reported that given everything they know now, they would choose this job again.
- More than half said they believed they could develop emotionally satisfying professional careers in their schools.

Career Perspectives

- Seventy-three percent (73%) of day school educators planned to spend the rest of their careers in Jewish education.
- Sixty-six percent (66%) of complementary school educators planned to spend the rest of their careers in Jewish education.
- Administrators perceived a lack of fully qualified candidates to fill job openings for educators in their schools.

Questions for Additional Research

Based on the EJSS findings explored thus far, it would seem the Jewish community is the beneficiary of a motivated, Jewishly experienced population of educators with significant tenure in the field of general and/or Jewish education and considerable academic credentials. Still, there are significant areas for future research.

- To what extent can we reframe the debate about perceived teacher scarcity and refocus our attention on the *quality* of our Jewish educators, not only the *quantity*?
- What relationship(s) exist between educators' employment patterns and their self-definition of their career tracks (not including "lateral moves" to other schools or taking "time off" for childrearing or other pursuits)?
- To what degree does the time and effort Jewish day and complementary school teachers spend collaborating with their colleagues compare with data from the larger field?
- How do these educators evaluate the likelihood they will remain in the field of Jewish education?
- What are the factors that cause educators to leave their current teaching positions and where do they go when they leave a specific school?
- What steps can the field take to increase the likelihood that complementary school educators, in particular, will feel they can have emotionally satisfying careers in those settings?

RETENTION OF EDUCATORS:

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE THEIR DECISIONS TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD?

JESNA's fourth and final learning goal for EJSS is on the minds of everyone who cares about Jewish education in day and complementary schools: "What factors influence teachers' decisions to remain in their careers as Jewish educators?"⁵³ Underneath the question lies a deeper uncertainty: are there now and will there be enough high-quality teachers in our Jewish day and complementary schools to educate our children in the myriad ways we hope and demand they be educated? EJSS data revealed that while these educators felt rewarded for their efforts (by and large), these rewards, financial or otherwise, may not be enough to retain these educators, especially the younger ones.

Factors That Impact Educators' Decisions to Stay in the Field

EJSS data showed that a constellation of elements of educators' current positions in Jewish schools — both concrete and affective, some within the control of individual day and complementary school leaders and policy-makers and some less tangible — impact their decisions to stay in the field. The *Educator Survey* asked day and complementary school teachers to rate the importance of 26 different factors on their decisions to stay in the field of Jewish education using a scale of one to five (1 = "not at all important" and 5 = "very important").

Day and complementary school teachers cited three factors in common most frequently as very important in their decision-making processes:

1. Work/home life balance;
2. How the school responds to students who are not thriving and the support educators receive for these students; and
3. Recognition and/or validation from school administrators and other key audiences.

Tables 3 and 4 break down these responses (by mean rating and by percent) according to day school and complementary school educators.

Comparing responses of Jewish day and complementary school educators likely to pursue their careers in Jewish education with those who are "likely to leave" illuminates contrasts between these two groups.⁵⁴ One hundred and thirty-four (134) day school educators (16%) and 111 complementary school educators (15%) responding to the *Educator Survey* fit this criteria. This segment of Jewish educators displayed some distinguishing characteristics that were remarkably consistent across school settings.

AGE AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Educators likely to leave tended to be younger and were more likely to be new to their current school (two or fewer years experience). Generally, they also had less total teaching experience in Jewish schools.
- Most (71%) of the day school educators likely to leave the field worked more than 30 hours per week.

⁵³ National Teacher's Association. "The statistics for turnover among new teachers are startling. Some 20 percent of all new hires leave the classroom within three years. But solving the teacher shortage is not strictly a numbers game. Much has been said about the need to bring more young people into the teaching profession. But too little attention has been paid to holding onto the quality teachers already hired — both the beginning teachers as well as the more seasoned ones." (Retrieved on November 4, 2007, from <http://www.nea.org/teachershortage/index.html>.)

⁵⁴ JESNA's analysis of the EJSS data considers a day or complementary school educator "likely to leave" if they (1) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I can imagine myself leaving the field of Jewish education in the next several years"; (2) answered "no" to the statement, "I envision spending the rest of my career in Jewish education"; and (3) were between the ages of 20 and 59. Educators age 60 or older were excluded because they are more likely to plan to retire in the next several years, rather than leave the field in pursuit of another type of work. We also excluded those under age 20, since they are more likely to be students pursuing Jewish education as a temporary job and may pursue another kind of career. In order for the data to be comparable, we limit the "likely to stay" group within the same age-based parameters.

TABLE 3. TOP 10 FACTORS FOR COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS DECIDING TO STAY IN THE FIELD

Factors	Mean Rating	Percent (%) by Rating Level		
		1–2	3	4–5
1. The balance between my work life and my home life	3.99	8.1%	18.2%	73.7%
2. How the school responds to students not thriving and the support educators receive for these students ⁵⁵	3.76	10.3%	24.2%	65.7%
3. Recognition and/or validation of my efforts by school administrators and students' parents ⁵⁶	3.69	14.8%	20.7%	64.6%
4. My total workload	3.55	18.6%	25.4%	55.9%
5. My students' behavior	3.54	18.1%	26.8%	55.0%
6. The quality of relationships among educators at this school	3.53	17.5%	25.2%	57.3%
7. Amount of class preparation time each week	3.44	19.7%	26.6%	53.7%
8. My salary	3.41	24.9%	21.0%	54.1%
9. Well-equipped classrooms	3.19	27.2%	30.0%	42.8%
10. Class size	3.15	28.7%	27.7%	43.5%

Rating is on a scale of one through five where 1="not at all important" and 5="very important." Percents may not equal 100% due to rounding.

CAREER PATH

- Those likely to leave more frequently said this job was NOT part of a career path they planned. Compared to their day school colleagues who were "likely to stay," day school educators in this category were much more likely to have taken the job because one was available.

GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT POSITION

- Most felt adequately recognized by their school administrator(s) and more than half reported general job satisfaction. This finding may call into question the validity of using "satisfaction" without corresponding variables to predict retention.

⁵⁵ These numbers reflect the average responses to four items: the support I get when my students are not thriving socially and emotionally; the support I get when my students are not thriving academically; the way the school handles students who are not thriving socially and emotionally; and the way the school handles students who are not thriving academically.

⁵⁶ These numbers reflect the average responses to two items: recognition and/or validation of my efforts by school administrators and recognition and/or validation of my efforts by my students' parents.

TABLE 4. TOP 10 FACTORS FOR DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS DECIDING TO STAY IN THE FIELD

Factors	Mean Rating	Percent (%) by Rating Level		
		1–2	3	4–5
1. The balance between my work life and my home life	4.12	7.4%	15.8%	76.9%
2. How the school responds to students who are not thriving and the support educators receive for these students ⁵⁷	3.98	6.9%	18.3%	74.8%
3. My salary	3.97	10.3%	18.5%	71.2%
4. Recognition and/or validation of my efforts by school administrators and students' parents ⁵⁸	3.95	7.6%	20.6%	71.9%
5. The quality of relationships among educators at this school	3.93	7.6%	21.4%	71.0%
6. My students' behavior	3.68	14.4%	24.2%	61.4%
7. My total workload	3.67	16.8%	22.1%	61.1%
8. Well-equipped classrooms	3.56	16.9%	27.5%	55.6%
9. Amount of class preparation time each week	3.53	17.4%	25.6%	57.0%
10. Class size	3.49	20.2%	24.5%	55.3%

Rating is on a scale of one through five where 1=“not at all important” and 5 =“very important.” Percents may not equal 100% due to rounding.

OPPORTUNITIES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

- Relative to those unlikely to leave, educators likely to leave disagreed or strongly disagreed more frequently that they had opportunities to develop an emotionally satisfying professional career and/or to develop an economically rewarding professional career at their current schools.

- Twenty-two percent (22%) of complementary school and 31% of day school educators “likely to leave” described themselves as having a career in Jewish education.
- Complementary school educators likely to leave generally responded less positively when asked about their opportunities to develop as highly skilled professional educators.

⁵⁷ See footnote 55.

⁵⁸ See footnote 56.

SALARY

- The majority of those “likely to leave” believed there wasn’t sufficient opportunity to develop an economically rewarding career at their current schools.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) of “likely to leave” day school educators earned between \$30,000 and \$49,999.
- Complementary school teachers “likely to leave” were more likely to have a salary less than \$5,000 annually than those who were not likely to leave.

FACTORS IMPORTANT TO DECISION-MAKING ABOUT STAYING IN THE FIELD

- Educators “likely to leave” the field rated work/home life balance, total workload, and student behavior more important than other factors that would influence them to remain in the field.

Revisiting Educators’ Salaries as a Factor in Retention

By and large, neither day nor complementary school educators perceived their positions as ripe with economic reward. The *Educator Survey* asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement, “There are opportunities for me to develop an economically rewarding professional career.”⁵⁹ While one-quarter of all respondents agreed with this statement, virtually half of all respondents (49%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating that a sizeable proportion of Jewish educators *already in the field* perceived a lack of opportunity for economically rewarding day and complementary school careers.

When JESNA analyzed educators’ attitudes about opportunities to develop an economically rewarding

career at their schools according to annual salary levels, data showed that current salary levels and responses related to future career development were significantly correlated. That is, on average, respondents who already had higher salaries were more likely to agree that there are opportunities to develop an economically rewarding professional career at their present school.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Fifteen percent (15%) of complementary school educators who earned less than \$50,000 felt hopeful that they could develop an economically rewarding professional career at their present schools. However, 68% of the small minority earning between \$50,000 and \$69,999 indicated they were hopeful about this same outcome.

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

EJSS data showed that salary was a very important factor for day school respondents considering whether they will remain in the field. A minority (22%) of those earning less than \$50,000 felt there were opportunities to develop an economically rewarding professional career at their current schools, whereas a somewhat larger percentage (36%) of those earning \$50,000–\$69,999 shared this view. The belief that one could develop an economically rewarding career in his/her current Jewish day school was most prevalent among those who earned \$70,000 or more annually.

Table 5 breaks down day and complementary school educators’ responses to this question by percent. Less than one-third of day school educators felt hopeful about developing an economically rewarding career at their present school and even fewer (18%) of complementary school educators felt hopeful about this outcome in their settings.

⁵⁹ Schaap and Goodman. (2006). “[R]espondents were asked to identify both what they found most attractive about the field of Jewish education and all the factors that they found unattractive. Intrinsic rewards, those with value that have little tangible benefit, such as serving the Jewish people, predominate in what people find attractive about the field. This factor is further substantiated by the respondents’ views of the tangible reward of salary and benefits as greatly lacking.”

TABLE 5. EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP AN ECONOMICALLY REWARDING PROFESSIONAL CAREER (IN JEWISH EDUCATION) BY PERCENT*

	Day School	Complementary School
Agree or strongly agree	31.2%	18.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	22.8%	30.3%
Disagree or strongly disagree	45.9%	51.4%
Total	99.9%	99.9%

*Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 6. EDUCATORS' CONSIDERATIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SALARY FOR STAYING IN THE FIELD OF JEWISH EDUCATION

<i>Educator Survey Respondent Population</i>	Mean Rating
Entire sample	3.7
Day school educators	4.0
Complementary school educators	3.4
10 or fewer hrs/week	3.3
11-20 hrs/week	3.8
21-30 hrs/week	3.8
31-40 hrs/week	4.1
More than 40 hrs/week	4.0

On a one to five scale where 1 = "not at all important" and 5 = "very important"

Conventional wisdom in the field says that the issues of teacher recruitment/retention and compensation walk hand-in-hand for Jewish schools just as they do for other private and public schools. The EJSS data revealed that the subject is more complex and that while educators' salaries are important, a number of other factors are at least of equal importance. Clearly and not surprisingly, educators' perceptions about salary were important considerations in their decisions about whether to stay in the field of Jewish education, particularly when their salary was critical to their household incomes. As expected (due to the greater percentage of teachers working more hours), day school educators regarded salary as a more important consideration affecting their decisions to stay in the field than did their complementary school colleagues.

Based on an analysis of the responses of all day school and complementary school educators, the data showed that the degree to which the educator's salary contributed to his/her total household income influenced his/her perspective about how critical salary was overall to any decision to remain in the field of Jewish education. On a scale of one to five (1 = "not at all important" and 5 = "very important"):

- More than half (51%) of those whose salary is the **MAIN SOURCE** of the household income considered salary very important for staying in the field.
- More than one-third (37%) of those whose salary is an **IMPORTANT SOURCE** of **ADDITIONAL** income considered salary very important for staying in the field.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of those for whom salary was **NOT SIGNIFICANT** to the total household income considered salary very important for staying in the field.

Table 6 lists the mean scores of respondents to this question for the entire sample, according to the

type of school, and according to the average number of hours educators work per week.

COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

On a scale from one to five (1 = “not at all important” and 5 = “very important”), complementary school respondents on average rated the importance of salary at a “3.4.” EJSS data supported the inference that the difference in rating of the importance of salary between complementary school and day school educators (who rated the importance of salary at “3.97”) resulted from the reality that most complementary school educators were part-time employees who were generally less dependent on their teacher’s salary as a main component of their total household income than were day school teachers.

Interestingly, using the same one to five scale, a large percentage of complementary school educators scored six factors other than salary at a “4” or “5” among their considerations about whether to stay in the field of Jewish education:

1. Work/home life balance;
2. School’s response to students not thriving and support educators receive for these students;
3. Recognition and/or validation by administrators and parents;
4. Quality of relationships among educators at their school;

5. Total work load; and
6. Student behavior.

DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

In addition to the three issues day school educators had in common with complementary school educators (work/home life balance; recognition and/or validation from school administrators; and how the school responds to students who are not thriving and support/resources available to educators for students who are not thriving), the greatest percentage of day school educators said salary was a very important issue that played into their considerations about staying in the field. As noted above, day school educators’ average rating of the importance of salary was “3.97” on the one to five scale. Day school educators ranked administrator recognition at 3.95, the school’s response to students not thriving at 3.98, and work/home life balance at 4.12.

Like most factors in the survey regarding staying in the field, day school educators generally reported higher mean scores than complementary school teachers when using the same scale to rate the importance of health coverage (3.3), insurance coverage (3.2), and pension or retirement plan (3.4) in their decision-making, likely because the majority of day school educators worked full-time and depended on their salary and benefits for a significant portion of their total household income.

HIGHLIGHTS: Retention of Educators

Top Three Important Factors Common to All Educators' Decision-Making About Staying in the Field

- Work/home life balance
- How the school responds to students who are not thriving
- Recognition and/or validation from school administrators

Salary

- Salary was rated among the most important factors, particularly for day school educators. However, it was not ranked substantially higher than other important factors.

- Salary was most important among those for whom it is the MAIN source of income.

Teachers who are "Likely to Leave" were:

- Younger and more likely to be new to their schools (fewer than two years in the school);
- More likely not to see their current job as part of a planned career; and
- Disagreed more often that they had opportunities to develop an emotionally satisfying and/or economically rewarding professional career.

Questions for Additional Research

- How can the field initiate and/or encourage explicit discussions about how schools respond to and support teachers in situations that involve students who are challenging and/or who are not thriving?
- What are the relationships between teachers' work hours, salaries, and benefits in their Jewish education positions overall (not only in the school where they completed the EJSS *Educator Survey*)? How might these data influence the potential desirability of providing benefits on a community-wide basis to teachers who work 31 hours or more per week (even if those hours are divided among several settings)?

EJSS CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the large-scale EJSS study are an important step toward creating a research-based portrait of educators in Jewish day and complementary schools in North America. Perhaps most importantly at this time, the data provided empirical confirmation for some of the conventional wisdom that has been circulating in the field, while calling other assumptions into question. As stated at the beginning, the purpose of this JESNA report was to profile the educators, better understand issues of motivation and recruitment, explore perspectives on educators' current positions, and uncover factors that may contribute to teacher retention. The report also was intended to identify specific leverage points — that is, to surface the modifiable variables affecting Jewish day and complementary school educators that the Jewish community and professionals in the field of Jewish education can and/or should address. This final section of the report pulls together the knowledge we have gained through EJSS; recommends actions to meet challenges on institutional, local, and national levels; and shines light on additional questions and issues for further research and exploration.

CHALLENGE: Educator Shortage

There is currently a shortage of *fully qualified* educators in Jewish day and complementary schools in North America. If current trends continue, we may face a critical teacher shortage (in terms of absolute/actual number of teachers) in the next 10 to 20 years.

WHAT WE KNOW

Based on EJSS findings, the Jewish community currently benefits from a population of highly educated, motivated educators with considerable experience in the fields of general and/or Jewish education who have participated as learners in a variety of Jewish educational experiences over their lifetimes. At the same time, data from the *Administrator Survey* showed that filling open positions in both day and complementary schools with *fully qualified* educators is a difficult task that often requires resorting to “suboptimal” strategies. The EJSS registry data confirmed this hardship — half of administrators reported that hiring Judaic studies staff was difficult. Finally, nearly half of day school educators and two-thirds of complementary school teachers who responded to the *Educator Survey* did not hold valid teaching credentials. This means the field does not have national or state-mandated requirements or a standard measure against which it can evaluate the basic competence of educators in Jewish schools. (For more information about credentials for Jewish educators, visit The National Board of License at <http://www.nationalboardoflicense.org>.)

Aside from the current scarcity of fully qualified teachers, EJSS also surfaced the very real possibility of a looming teacher shortage *overall* on the educational horizon. Data revealed that 40% to 46% of teachers in both day and complementary schools were 50-years-old or older. Compounding this issue is the reality that younger teachers tended to be less certain that they would stay in the field of Jewish education than older teachers. In fact, less than half (48%) of teachers younger than 30-years-old responded “yes” to the statement, “I envision spending the rest of my career in Jewish education.” This “graying” of the educators in Jewish schools reflects the national demographic in education and raises the likelihood that the Jewish educator population (fully qualified or not) will diminish over the next two decades.

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

EJSS data substantiated the need to expand the pool of qualified teachers now — and especially in the future. Without a sufficient pool of qualified educators it will be impossible to create and deliver the effective, innovative Jewish education that Jewish community leaders and parents are demanding and that the Jewish community needs to develop and thrive. Advocacy efforts must take place on the institutional, local, and national levels. For example, Jewish educator recruitment and retention must be placed “front and center” on the agendas of religious movements, day school organizations, federations, and foundations. While

day school and complementary school settings are very different in terms of their needs for educators, both face the realities of this issue.

With these national empirical data in hand, we must re-engage key stakeholders (lay and professional educational leaders and funders) in solutions-oriented conversations to raise awareness about the current and impending needs of the field and generate action in three areas:

- *Professional development*: place greater emphasis on well-designed, highly effective professional development to improve the qualifications and ensure the competencies of educators who are currently in the field and to minimize reliance on suboptimal strategies for filling teaching positions.
- *Mentors and master teachers*: implement strategies to retain well-trained and qualified educators to work directly with students and to mentor and support colleagues. Leverage the master teachers who may soon be leaving the field to ease the induction and acculturation of new Jewish educators into the field.
- *Pre-service teacher training*: expand efforts to recruit and train new cohorts of Jewish educators through a more coordinated range of pre-service teacher training programs and continuing education programs.

Individual schools, as well as organizations that serve as the umbrella for multiple schools, have the power to develop community-wide approaches that capitalize on local assets and take into account educators' particular needs and issues. These local, community-based initiatives will deepen educators' understanding of the "big picture" and provide a context in which to address training, recruitment, and retention. They will also help school leaders and supporters assess their real needs in the present and the foreseeable future, based on current staffing and teacher qualifications, current and anticipated enrollment, programmatic directions, and a

prediction of staff retention and attenuation. These understandings will allow them to plan responsibly and act effectively.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Three areas of research would enhance our knowledge about the current state of Jewish educators in the field, allow us to better assess immediate and longer-term needs, and allow key stakeholders to evaluate the most effective ways to impact the lives and careers of Jewish educators. These are:

- Securing additional trends data (for educators in Jewish and general education) and data about successful models for teacher training and ongoing professional development at the local and national levels;
- Investigating specific variables affecting supply and demand for educators in Jewish schools in particular areas and settings;
- Assessing differential needs (e.g., different types of schools, content areas, new and established educators, etc.); and
- Determining ways to better understand and support teacher quality in the classroom.

CHALLENGE: Educator Recruitment

Recruiting fully qualified Jewish educators for Jewish day and complementary schools is a difficult and multifaceted task that must take into consideration not only potential educators' likely motivators, professional experiences, and Jewish education backgrounds, but also the role of institutions and individuals who can impact their career choices.

WHAT WE KNOW

EJSS revealed that Jewish day and complementary school educators overwhelmingly chose their jobs out of a sense of mission and passion for connecting with and playing an influential role in the lives of students. When asked about their motivations to work in their particular schools (and by extrapolation in the field of Jewish education),

educators across the board indicated they were most motivated by a desire to make a real impact on students and by the opportunity to work individually with students and to get to know them well. For example, over 90% of teachers in both settings were motivated to work in their schools by a desire to impact the life paths of students. Other intrinsic motivating factors varied according to teaching venue. The majority (76%) of day school teachers were motivated to teach in their settings out of a desire to work with students who are self-motivated to learn, while contributing to the Jewish community was a prime motivator for 88% of the complementary school teachers surveyed.

EJSS findings showed that “tapping” or encouragement by a Jewish school administrator, educator, or other communal professional (including clergy) was a key factor that inspired or motivated many responding day and complementary school teachers to enter the field of Jewish education, whether or not they came to their current positions as part of a planned career path. In addition to the intervention of specific individuals, the vast majority of Jewish EJSS respondents from both day and complementary schools participated in Jewish formal and experiential educational programs as youth and/or adult learners, with most participating in multiple experiences. As other research has demonstrated, such participation is not only formative and instructive, but also can provide opportunities for exposing potential teachers to Jewish educational career possibilities and for preliminary induction and training. The sites in which formal and informal Jewish education takes place may be ideal venues for this “tapping” and encouraging of promising candidates.

EJSS showed that nearly half of responding day and complementary school educators had some experience teaching in public schools and a minority had experience teaching in private schools that were not Jewish. These data

confirmed long-held anecdotal evidence that many Jewish day and complementary schools employ teachers with experience teaching in secular settings, capitalizing on their pedagogic experience and expertise.

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

Based on these findings, the Jewish community cannot underestimate the impact of “gatekeepers” in encouraging and recruiting the next generation of talented educators. These personal efforts to recruit Jewish educators must tap into the personal and professional motivations that potential educators share, as well as those that characterize teachers in different settings. Such efforts should consider the benefits of working not only with pre-service candidates in formal and informal Jewish education settings and in institutions of higher learning, but also with seasoned teachers in private and public schools who may be attracted by opportunities to put their experience and expertise to use in a new type of school setting. As with the challenge of an educator shortage, the challenge of teacher recruitment must be addressed simultaneously at the national, local, and institutional levels.

- *Nationally:* work with interested funders and partners to develop and implement action research and demonstration projects that “tap into” what we know about what motivates educators to enter the field. Careful monitoring and evaluation should inform the diffusion of effective practices from these demonstration projects. The lessons learned about what works under what circumstances could be used to inform policy-making and program planning in the field broadly.
- *Regionally and locally:* Jewish schools would benefit from this national initiative because they could examine these learnings and then replicate or adapt recruitment and educator development initiatives to suit their immediate and longer-term needs. Smaller schools could work through

their denominational sponsors or other collective bodies (e.g., central agencies and local bureaus of Jewish education) to identify themselves as “likely suspects” for these demonstration projects. Each of the demonstration sites then could share its learnings locally, in addition to feeding information back to the national sponsor. Likewise, the national and regional organizations can use their collective wisdom of the field to help local schools prognosticate their future needs and develop community-wide strategies to address them.

- *Institutionally*: this new research would enable leaders in the field to begin to anticipate the needs of Jewish day and complementary schools (in terms of raw numbers of educators needed, as well as qualifications and characteristics essential to various schools) and to establish systems and funding streams proactively that will open up possibilities for meeting those needs. Institutions also have the power to advocate for “tapping” and to make it a required and conscious component of local leaders’ responsibilities (e.g., directors of camps, Federation program providers, JCC education directors). Institutional leaders would have to be willing to train and provide resources to educational and communal leaders to perform this function.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The first steps in addressing the challenge of recruiting fully qualified educators for Jewish schools are:

- Capturing more specific information about what attracts and/or dissuades “the best and the brightest” from teaching in Jewish day and complementary schools;
- Understanding the times and places potential Jewish educators are open to “tapping”;
- Exploring the types of educational experiences

and venues most likely to tap into educators’ intrinsic motivators to channel their skills and passion into Jewish schools; and

- Understanding the relationship between “qualified” educators and excellence in the classroom.

CHALLENGE: Educator Retention

There is little benefit to identifying, training, and recruiting fully qualified Jewish educators if Jewish day and complementary schools cannot retain the talent of these teachers. Increasing turnover is an ongoing challenge for all K–12 schools in North America that requires not only a vision, but also specific and concrete plans to identify and meet teachers’ needs for long-term success.

WHAT WE KNOW

The good news from EJSS is that more than 80% of both Jewish day and complementary school teachers expressed high levels of job satisfaction. By and large, educators in both settings felt rewarded and recognized for their work and would “do it all again” if they were back at the start of their careers. Findings from the *Educator Survey* showed that salary and benefits were very important to day school educators and less important (although still significant) to complementary school educators in terms of their decisions to remain in the field of Jewish education.

For both groups, the common salient factors related to their work/home life balance, their ability to be effective in their roles (i.e., school effectiveness in enabling students to thrive), and recognition and validation for their work. Day school teachers also considered salary very important. For complementary school teachers, factors related to the school environment (e.g., student discipline and quality of relationships with fellow educators) were important to more than half of the respondents, although not as important as the factors previously listed. Salary was somewhat important to complementary school educators, although not nearly as important as it was to day school teachers.

All of these factors (some of which are interrelated and/or related to salary) are dependent upon addressing fundamental and complicated issues related to school culture, roles and expectations of educators, and other variables.

The financial and/or intrinsic rewards the field currently offers may not be enough to retain Jewish educators — especially the younger ones. The majority of teachers who reported they were “likely to leave” the field in the next several years believed there wasn’t sufficient opportunity to develop an economically rewarding career at their current schools. Most of the day school educators who were “likely to leave” worked more than 30 hours per week and earned less than \$50,000 per year. Complementary school teachers who were “likely to leave” tended to earn less than \$5,000 annually from their primary Jewish teaching jobs. EJSS data showed that the more important a teacher’s salary was to his/her overall household income, the more salient it was in his/her decision-making regarding staying in the field. As expected, therefore, financial considerations are less important determinants of complementary school teachers’ decisions to stay in the field because they are generally less dependent than day school teachers on their Jewish school salaries as the main component of their total household income.

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

There is no silver bullet. EJSS data showed that a constellation of factors, both concrete and affective, contributes to a given educator’s decision to remain in the field of Jewish education. Some conditions were relatively straightforward and may respond to changes in policy and practice, while others were less tangible and will require complex solutions involving changes to school culture. Effective solutions include initiatives at multiple leverage points.

- *Improving teacher effectiveness:* collect and disseminate information about promising

strategies and programs to provide a supportive work/home life balance (e.g., provision of childcare by the school; built-in “prep” and collegial time to develop lessons and/or ongoing professional development; structuring shared positions). Develop, implement, and evaluate demonstration projects to learn which approaches are most effective under what circumstances.

- *Recognition and validation:* share information about school-wide, local, and national recognition programs and explore them in light of the needs and capacities of the individual schools. Establish meaningful recognition programs where they do not exist and expand those where they do.
- *School culture and environment:* schools must create a culture that nurtures reflective practitioners at all levels. In this way, schools will learn how to assess/reflect on areas for improvement related to the broader school culture and environment and will be able to embark on systematic school improvement initiatives to address specific challenges.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Learn more about individuals who left, why they did so, and where they are now.
- Develop a better understanding of the impact(s) of salary and benefits on educators who are just entering the field.
- Ascertain what schools provide and what educators desire in terms of recognition.
- Explore the impact of recognition on educator performance, satisfaction, and career perspectives.
- Evaluate the effects of changes in the school culture and environment that are designed to enhance teacher effectiveness and/or satisfaction.

CHALLENGE: Professional Development for Educators

Evidence in the field suggests that teachers who do not participate in ongoing professional development are less effective in the classroom and less likely to be able to meet the emerging needs of students, administrators, and the field of Jewish education.

WHAT WE KNOW

EJSS findings about teachers' participation in professional development opportunities and their schools' support of their involvement were very promising — while pointing to clear areas for significant advancement and improvement. EJSS revealed good news: participation in some form of professional development over the past year was typical for Jewish educators in day and complementary schools. Virtually all EJSS respondents (92%) said that they had attended some professional development activities in the past 12 months, with over half of day school respondents and more than one-quarter of complementary respondents participating in activities that lasted more than one day. Nevertheless, the professional development experiences of the remainder of the respondents were shorter in duration.

EJSS data indicated that educators who engaged in professional development activities lasting more than one day (and who did not report participating in activities of shorter durations) felt more hopeful about their ability to develop an emotionally satisfying professional career at their primary schools and about developing as highly skilled professional educators than were their colleagues who reported participating in professional development activities lasting one day or less.

Complementary school administrators were likely to stipulate requirements for educators' participation in professional development in their contracts. Paid time off for participating in professional development was the most common benefit provided to teachers by their schools. Fifty-one

percent (51%) of all responding teachers and 65% of full-time teachers received compensation for the time they spent in professional development. Still, nearly half of all teachers and over one-third of full-time teachers were not compensated for time spent in this professional activity. Additionally, in many cases, both complementary and day school teachers paid their own ways, whether or not they received paid time off to attend the activities.

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

While such high reported levels of participation in some form of professional development in the past 12 months is a good first step, a growing body of professional literature decries the ineffectiveness of one-shot or short-duration professional development workshops for educators. Professional development for Jewish educators is essential, but it is not yet normative, supported fully, nor utilized effectively. The EJSS findings suggested significant need and opportunity for the Jewish education community to consider ways to deepen, intensify, and connect to professional development in a more meaningful and ongoing way, including:

- Demonstration projects testing out different formats, delivery systems, and incentives to increase participation in professional development;
- Community-wide approaches to meet the varied needs of educators with different backgrounds, in different settings, at different career stages; and
- Professional development as part of professional role (i.e., provided/paid for by school, included as part of work load and job description, opportunities for collegial sharing and peer support).

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Explore various extant community models for educators' professional development.
- Analyze the relationship between educators'

participation in professional development and their professional growth and/or likelihood of retention (especially for teachers at early and later career stages).

- Understand the types and intensity of professional development offered to Jewish educators and the relationship of those experiences to excellence in the classroom.
- Discover which types of professional development are most relevant to and/or valued by educators in Jewish schools.
- Assess the needs for induction, coaching, and mentoring of new teachers in light of the large numbers of “new” teachers (those with fewer than two years in their current positions) in day and complementary school settings.

CHALLENGE: Differentiating Needs & Solutions for Day and Complementary Schools

While there clearly are “field-wide” trends that affect recruitment, development, and retention of fully qualified Jewish educators, there are significant differences between day and complementary school settings. The field must acknowledge and understand the differences in these settings among a wide range of variables, such as school staffing patterns and staffing needs, educators’ motivators, professional growth and development opportunities, and salaries and benefits. Only then can it develop well-defined, intentional, approaches that account for these differences and appropriately address Jewish schools’ challenges.

WHAT WE KNOW

EJSS clarified that we cannot conceive of “Jewish educators” as an amorphous block of teachers. Neither can we respond to the concerns of day school and complementary school educators and/or administrators in the same ways. As noted previously, there is no “one size fits all” solution; different educators and different schools have unique needs and require different emergent types of skills/educators to meet the future.

Additionally, EJSS showed that a sizeable percentage of both day (45%) and complementary school (64%)

teachers were working in multiple day and/or complementary school settings. Complementary school educators were more likely than their day school colleagues to have maintained (or to currently maintain) multiple jobs in the past year.

WHAT WE CAN DO NOW

The universe of possibilities is endless in each setting. Furthermore, there is increasing convergence between more formal and more experiential learning in day and complementary school classes. Therefore, two recommendations should guide specific work in the field.

- *Think globally:* continue to stay astride the field and explore the various models and modes that prove successful, as well as those that don’t make the grade. Without solid contextual information, even the most creative solutions cannot flourish. Responses should be research-based to the extent possible.
- *Act locally:* develop targeted strategies that take into account the differential needs of each educational mode, the availability of fully qualified educators, the capacity of the community, and the populations of students and parents.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Explore the question of salary more deeply in each setting to better understand the interplay between salary and other variables, such as full-time/part-time teaching, impact on household income, and perspectives on Jewish education as an economically rewarding career.
- Analyze the various factors that lead people into careers — not just “jobs” — in Jewish education. Pay particular attention to the day and complementary school experiences of educators teaching in those settings to understand the impact of personal experience on their career tracks and to consider how to capitalize on these motivators.

EJSS: FINAL THOUGHTS

The EJSS findings paint a vivid snapshot of the teachers in the field today and provide data that may inform key stakeholders about the factors that motivate them to enter and remain in the field of Jewish education in Jewish day and complementary schools. In the near term, EJSS provides empirical bases on which the field of Jewish education and Jewish communal leaders can:

- Advocate for funding to provide optimal professional development, competitive salaries, and essential benefits (e.g., health care) for day and complementary school teachers;
- Caucus about alternative approaches and incentives to address an anticipated shortage of teachers in the next decade;
- Develop actionable hypotheses and test them

through controlled demonstration and intervention projects; and

- Delineate and support different forms of professional development and pre-professional teacher preparation to meet the emergent needs of the field.

Ideally, this EJSS report will stimulate critical discussions necessary for responsible policy and decision-making in Jewish education. Such institutional, local, and national conversations will educate the field of Jewish education and related stakeholders toward a cultural shift of respect and advocacy on behalf of Jewish educators in their communities to the benefit of our educators, our schools, and our Jewish communities in North America.

ABOUT JESNA

JESNA's role is to strengthen communities and their educational offerings by providing tested solutions, leveraging partnerships, promoting synergies, and building the connections that strengthen us all. In partnership with education leaders, funders, and dreamers, JESNA draws on its 25 years of institutional experience and its expert staff to focus on a continuous cycle of improvement, progressing from learning to dissemination to active application in geographical and topical communities and back again.

In order to support our partners and clients in accomplishing their goals in Jewish education, we employ a wide range of tools and methodologies. We convene, network, evaluate, advocate, consult, and encourage. We apply innovative ideas, cutting-edge technology, proven models, data, and practical know-how. We work in teams across disciplines to ensure that we manage internal and external knowledge to maximize the impact of every project. We know that our agenda is ambitious. We also know that this work is critical if Jewish education is to fulfill its promise for North American Jewry in the 21st century and beyond.

JESNA equips communities and institutions with the knowledge they need to deliver engaging, high-quality Jewish education. We do this through three program units:

- *The Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education.* The Berman Center conducts state-of-the-art evaluations of educational programs to help sponsors improve these programs and to assess their effectiveness and impact. The Berman Center also works with program providers to help them improve their abilities to conduct and utilize evaluations and to build a culture of data-driven decision-making throughout the continental system.
- *The Learnings and Consultation Center (LCC).* The LCC disseminates knowledge about what works in Jewish education and under what circumstances to communities and institutions and helps them to apply this knowledge through one-on-one consultations, communities of practice, demonstration projects, web resources, publications, and special projects (such as educator awards).
- *The Lippman Kanfer Institute (LKI): An Action-Oriented Think Tank for Innovation in Jewish Learning and Engagement.* The Lippman Kanfer Institute identifies and analyzes promising new directions in educational practice and policy and engages leaders in thinking about how to implement these innovations more widely.

In addition to sponsoring the EJSS study, JESNA is responding to the issues of recruitment, training, support, and retention of high-caliber Jewish educators through a range of programs: the Lainer Interns program, the Professional Development Center web site, a community of practice for central agency professional development specialists, the New England regional teacher development pilot project, and the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards.



Publications and Dissemination Project (PDP):
An initiative of JESNA's Learnings & Consultation Center (LCC)

Jewish Education Service of North America
111 8th Avenue, 11th Floor • New York, NY 10011 USA
212.284.6950 • 212.284.6951 fax • www.jesna.org