



## AVI CHAI Dramatically Expands BetterLesson Coaching to Jewish Day School Teachers

by BetterLesson

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**(New York and Cambridge, MA -- August 7, 2018)** – Building on a successful three-year partnership to support teachers in North American Jewish day schools to build their capacity to bring blended and personalized learning strategies to their students, [The AVI CHAI Foundation](#) and [BetterLesson](#) are extending and expanding their work through the 2018-2019 school year.

The partnership began as a pilot program in 2015 when 43 teachers received personalized coaching from BetterLesson throughout the school year. It has since expanded exponentially to include hundreds of participants and partnerships with scores of individual schools. To date, BetterLesson has supported almost 400 educators across 77 Jewish day schools in the US and Canada. In the 2018-19 school year, approximately 300 teachers from 70 different schools will participate in the initiative and receive one-to-one coaching from experienced teachers via videoconference.

“BetterLesson meets the criteria for impactful professional learning; it is job-embedded, personalized and long-lasting,” says Rachel Mohl Abrahams, Senior Program Officer at AVI CHAI. “We have seen how teachers shift their practices while working with their coaches to reflect on what’s working and how to make continuous improvements. The number of teachers who have returned to be coached for a second year is a testament to the value of the program.”

The partnership is geared toward supporting teachers with a range of experience, providing coaching for beginning educators as well as those with more years in the classroom. Teachers receive their own personal professional development from BetterLesson’s master coaches, including strategies to help them solve important teaching challenges related to increasing student agency, creating opportunities for deeper student collaboration and communication, and fostering students’ creative thinking skills.

“With my coach’s help, I have not only rearranged my classroom, but have rearranged the way in which I teach!” said Missy Bernosky, Elementary Teacher, Robert M. Beren Academy in Houston, Texas. “I went from frontal teaching - teacher-led lessons - to a student driven and led classroom. My coach changed the way I thought about teaching and was helpful and positive all the way through!”

### *The AVI CHAI Foundation Legacy*

Equipping teachers to improve their practices has been a centerpiece of The AVI CHAI Foundation's goal of improving the quality of day school education by increasing individualized data-based instruction and enabling students to develop skills and ways of thinking needed in the 21st century. Since 2010, the Foundation has supported [blended learning integration within Jewish day schools](#), providing encouragement and assistance through a diverse set of grants. BetterLesson's professional development provides teachers comprehensive support in applying blended learning strategies in their classrooms.

The timing of this latest engagement coincides with the sunseting of the Foundation. AVI CHAI is helping to transition the initiative to be directed by local and regional agencies, partnering with federations, donors and foundations that support day school education. The first community-based cohorts are in Boston, Seattle, Montreal, and Miami.

### *The Design Studio Experience*

The engagement with BetterLesson begins in-person with a two-day "Design Studio" in which teachers choose an area of their practice that they want to develop further. They then collaborate with their BetterLesson coaches to design a plan to implement new blended and personalized learning systems and strategies. Each Design Studio is followed by ongoing implementation support by BetterLesson coaches, including bi-weekly meetings and on-demand coach support, throughout the academic year.

"We couldn't be more heartened by the impact coaching is having on evolving teacher practices and the trust that AVI CHAI has placed in expanding this partnership," said BetterLesson co-founder Alex Grodd. "These teachers are better equipped to shift their practices so they can best prepare their students for a rapidly evolving world."

### **About BetterLesson:**

BetterLesson was founded by teachers for teachers. Since 2008 BetterLesson has empowered hundreds of thousands of teachers with the skills they need to lead learner-centered classrooms and ensure the success of all students.

After pioneering a simple way for educators to connect and share their most engaging and effective lesson plans, BetterLesson has grown into the leading provider of personalized professional development for K-12 educators of all kinds through one-on-one virtual coaching, Design Workshops, and distributing lesson plans authored by Master Teachers.

### **About AVI CHAI:**

The AVI CHAI Foundation was founded in 1984 by Zalman Chaim Bernstein z"l. Since then, the foundation's mission continues to be to further the perpetuation of the Jewish people, Judaism, and the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish people through its operations in North America, Israel, and the former Soviet Union. In North America, the foundation's focus

has been to foster and nurture Jewish literacy, religious purposefulness, and peoplehood/Israel at Jewish day schools and overnight summer camps. With a sunset date of 2020, AVI CHAI's goal for its remaining time is to nurture and grow the strength and influence of institutions, people and ideas that serve the day school and overnight camp fields.