

How Schools Enact Their Jewish Missions

20 Case Studies of Jewish Day Schools

A Project of the AVI CHAI Foundation

Whom Do Jewish Day Schools Serve?

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“Mommy, five more minutes...please!” Three-year-old Tamir McCourt called out. Seconds later he was clamoring up the steps of the indoor slide to join his best buddy Livia. The two of them slid down, and, amidst much laughter, landed on top of one another on the colorful crash-mats below. Evidently, they weren't quite ready to go home after two hours of Sunday morning play in the gym at the Hannah Senesh Community Day School.

While Tamir and Livia looked as if they'd stretch their five minutes to five hours, their parents were ready to head out. Tamir's baby sister Zoey was already bundled up. She was in a stroller parked in the school library in the next-door room where the tables had been pushed to the side to make space for a congested stroller-park. Tamir's father Patrick, rocking Zoey back and forth, was ready to take the short walk home for lunch. One of Livia's mothers had her own jacket on too. She was talking animatedly on the phone while Livia's other mom was saying her farewells to another family.

While this scene was playing out, Angie Lieber, development director of the school, was looking on with a wide smile. She had never seen either of these families before. They were first-timers at any kind of school event, even though it seemed that they lived within walking distance. It so happened they had come in on a day when there was a special “Step Into: Tu Bishvat” program for the community, but Angie wasn't even sure that these children had participated in any of the themed centers that had been laid out in one half of the gym. The fruit painting, fruit-car building, and herb-planting activities, not to mention the shadow puppet show, seemed to appeal more to slightly older children. Given the happy expressions on the kids' faces, it looked like these children and their parents would be back.

It was actually incredible how many families had come in to the school that morning. Although the school was located in the heart of Brownstone Brooklyn, Angie knew that families had come in from a number of different Brooklyn neighborhoods and even from the Upper West Side of Manhattan. While there weren't as many families as had been at a Sunday Hanukkah Art Festival back in December when more than 300 people had packed in to the gym, they still could not have predicted that Tu Bishvat would be such a crowd-pleaser. The

attendance list outside in the lobby showed that more than 90 families had passed through. The great majority did not have children in the school or have them registered for future years. They were either taking advantage of the reasonably priced play-space that the school offered each Sunday during the winter months, when it was too cold to go to the park, or they had come in especially for that day's Tu Bishvat program.

On her own walk home later that day, a big woolly hat pulled low over her ears, Angie reflected on how she had found herself at the heart of a project that in some ways challenged some very old assumptions about what Jewish day schools were for. Angie — who was not a day school graduate herself — had been at the school for a little more than four years. She had joined the administration having come from the JCC of Manhattan, where she had served as head of public relations. Coming to Hannah Senesh promised a change of pace; despite its proximity to Manhattan, Senesh was really a village school with 200 children. Yet beginning her work as Director of Development at Hannah Senesh provided an opportunity to be at the cutting edge of something new and, so it turned out, of far-reaching significance.

Coming to Senesh had also provided a chance to work with the Head of School, Nicole Nash. Angie met Nicole through mutual friends a few years back. Interviewing for the development director job, she was captivated by Nicole's own professional journey and her vision for the school. At that time, Nicole had herself only just been formally appointed as Head of School. She had been with the school for the previous 14 years. In 1995, she had been the school's first hire, and had stayed ever since, through two changes of location and two heads of school. She had come to Senesh straight out of graduate school, and had walked in to her first job as the school's first ever 1st and 2nd grade teacher. Since then, she had filled an impressive number of educational and leadership positions in the school.

When Angie was offered the job, she was tantalized by Nicole's sense that there was an opportunity to do something in this school that went beyond providing the best possible education to the children and parents. At that time, neither Nicole nor Angie had a proper sense of what exactly that might be; perhaps none of the school's professional or lay-leadership

did then. In fact, during Nicole's first couple of years as Head, the chief task was not to set out on some new experimental direction. Instead, most of her energies were concentrated on a strategic plan that focused on board development and fundraising, growing the school to capacity and bolstering the educational program.

That was why, when Angie had taken the job at Senesh, she had not expected to serve as director of this initiative or to be

at school at least one Sunday morning a month, or on week-day evenings. It had really been a case of one thing leading to another such that, in the space of just a few years, the school had become an emerging center for Jewish life in the neighborhood, and not just for the more than 100 enrolled families. Turning the key in her front door, Angie wondered where this might now lead.

If today it was hard to know where these developments might take the school, it was no less difficult to determine where these developments had started. Strictly speaking, the school's emergent role as a hub for local Jewish life was kick-started by a UJA-Federation "ignition" grant directed towards programming for 0–2 year olds. That grant had enabled the school to launch its Sundays@Senesh program during the winter months. Sundays@Senesh, basically a play-space program for young children with an additional Jewish music and movement component, had subsequently led to a Covenant Foundation grant to run SmallCity@Senesh, a year-round suite of Jewish educational programs for preschoolers, teens and adults that operated out of the school at different times of the week. Each of these initiatives launched a new chapter in the school's evolving identity. But, for those like Nicole and for some long-standing board members who had been involved in the school since its start, the story had started much earlier; it wasn't just a matter of seizing the opportunities provided by these recent grants. What the school had become today could be traced back to the concept of community that informed its birth or that at least had informed its relaunch as a Community day school once it left its first home in a Reform synagogue and moved to its own rented site.

The school's mission statement, crafted at the time of its launch, and unchanged since then, sounded a lot like what one might find in other Jewish day schools.

The mission of the Hannah Senesh Community day school is to develop caring, confident and knowledgeable students, equipped with the skill and commitment to become life-long learners, and capable of embracing and participating

in the rich diversity of modern Jewish life. We prepare students to forge and sustain a meaningful Jewish identity while living as fully engaged, active members of American society. In fulfilling this mission, we encourage our students' families to become actively involved in the life of the school, sharing in their children's enthusiasm and educational growth.

This was the kind of mission statement that might be embraced by any number of Jewish day schools that welcomed diversity among their students and involvement among their parents. How that mission had been brought to life, however, was far from typical. Life in the school reflected, in distinctive ways, the shared values of an unusual mix of families who were drawn to a Jewish Community day school in this particular corner of Brooklyn, one of New York's most politically liberal, institutionally unaffiliated and fastest growing Jewish communities.

The vision of community that animated the school since those early days was not one of a place with high walls that kept those inside safe from those outside; it was expansive and inclusive. At the time of its founding, this vision was born of the fact that a sizeable minority of the parents were not Jewish day school graduates themselves. They had come to Brooklyn not only because homes were cheaper than in Manhattan but also because they felt more of a sense of community there than in Long Island or New Jersey, even while there was an astonishing diversity of families wedged in to those brownstone-lined streets. In Jewish terms, these families were not inclined to affiliate; but their aversion to institutional affiliation did not mean that they were disconnected. On the contrary, they valued authenticity

and integrity in Jewish things, as they did in all aspects of their lives. That's why so many of them shopped, for example, at the Park Slope Food Coop. Its mission statement — expressing a commitment to diversity, responsibility and cooperation — shared many of the same values found at the school.

Over time, this vision of an expansive, inclusive and authentic Jewish community came to be reflected in the school's approach to teaching Judaism and Jewish culture. It was seen in a commitment to ensure that the students experienced authentic Jewish culture during school time; that they held *tefillah* and recited *birkhat hamazon* every day (more frequently than in many more traditional schools), and that they came to see, especially in the middle school, how through the study of Jewish text one could get to talk about the things that matter most. As one of the school's long-standing teachers put it, just as the Renaissance Poet Edmund Spenser talked about finding the gloves to hold things that were too hot, so one can use Tanakh to hold such things. The text could provide a safe space within which to explore radically divergent views of the world while employing authentic Jewish language and concepts. As the faculty often said, one need not be apologetic about challenges posed by Jewish text; those challenges called for honest inquiry and tough questions.

In recent years, the school's inclusiveness came to be reflected in and magnified by its physical location. Situated on a regular Brooklyn high street squeezed alongside a coffee bar and subway station, it was an attractive low-slung building whose windows were right on the street and through whose doors people could easily pop in and out. The school's name was inscribed above the front door in modest-sized letters. Its publicity material and program information was always available directly on the street from specially designed cubbies. These physical details conveyed a message that everyone was welcome.

Last but not least, the school's distinct community ethos was expressed both in the ways that families of great diversity became knitted together as a result of their shared association and also as a consequence of the programs that the parent body undertook as a collective. As at many schools, Hannah Senesh students were engaged in a variety of social action activities. More unusually, for a number of years the parents association had been running a once-a-month social action

program for families in which parents and children joined to make a difference in the community in which they lived. On any given occasion, there might be as many as 30 families coming together to clean up the local park, rake the leaves and plant bulbs, visit the local nursing home to entertain its residents or work at the *Masbia* soup kitchen [a New York area initiative serving kosher food to the poor] where parents and children did everything from peel potatoes to serve at tables. These programs had become powerful expressions of the school's collective commitment to Jewish values and to helping improve the quality of life in the wider neighborhood. The programs also nurtured an identity that, as the school matured, made it perfectly natural for the school's leadership to consider playing an ever more active role in the Jewish community beyond its walls.

Within the school's walls, just as there were parents who had led rich Jewish lives since their childhoods, there were many families who, once enrolled at Senesh, found themselves connecting and committing for the first time to a Jewish community. The personal story of Lisa Katz, the Parent Association's social action chair, was emblematic of many more such stories. Lisa had very little Jewish education of her own. She was a single mother, living in south Brooklyn and working in TV in Manhattan. By chance she stumbled on an article in *New York Magazine* about choosing schools, and what one might consider if weighing private and/or religious education. The article mentioned the Hannah Senesh Community Day School by name. She went to check it out with her daughter who had already interviewed at many private schools. When they stepped inside, her daughter's eyes lit up. Although they didn't know anyone, they had a sense of being unconditionally welcomed. They didn't live so close by, but they signed up. The F-train became her daughter's school bus.

In Lisa's own words, Hannah Senesh provided her daughter with the best possible education, and it provided her with an experience of Jewish community that she had never really enjoyed before, even as a child. Not knowing anyone, her daughter desperately needed a BFF (a "best friend forever"); the mother of her daughter's best friend became one her own closest friends, someone who provided her with support in tough times and shared in her joy at other times. Once, when

Lisa's own mother was sick, one of her daughter's friends' mothers invited her to her synagogue so that they could pray together for her mother's health. Over the years, through such relationships — and it really was a case of one relationship giving birth to another — she became connected to a group of people whose lives were often quite different from hers, but with whom she felt completely at ease. It was through these

Stories like Lisa's demonstrated that the school's commitment to community was rooted deep in its culture and in the values of those who chose to enroll their children. The flowering of those values into an initiative to serve the broader Jewish community and not just those whose children were enrolled only developed momentum once the school had moved to a specially designed facility. At this point — right before its 13th year and once Nicole had been appointed Head a year later — Angie had the good fortune to enter the picture.

Over these years, there was an alignment of fortuitous circumstances. The two Heads who had led the school since its founding had each played critical roles in its development, first as a start-up and then in the transition to a full renovated site and in the opening of a middle school. They had established a firm base from which to grow. During Nicole's first couple of years, working with a capable lay and professional team, they were able to move from an annual budget deficit to a small surplus. Because Nicole herself had been with the school for so long and had lived in the neighborhood for a number of years, she was deeply aware of how the local community had changed during that time. In particular, increasing numbers of young Jewish families were moving in to the neighboring streets. These were people she met in the local stores or on weekends. Sometimes, it seemed as if there were babies everywhere.

Over at the UJA-Federation of New York, there was also a growing awareness of these demographic changes and of both their potential and the challenges they posed. On the one hand, the borough had one of the highest concentrations of young Jewish families in New York. On the other hand, very few families were affiliated or had access to local Jewish programming. These were the circumstances that led the

relationships that she had begun to develop connections with other New York Jewish institutions for the first time in her life, even experimenting with participating in different synagogues. Stepping through the doors at Senesh had been like coming home. Chairing the social action committee was a chance to give back to those who had held the door open for her.

Federation to encourage Nicole to submit for an ignition grant for the 0–2 age group.

At the end of the summer of 2010, the school was given a couple of months to submit a proposal. In fact, with the launch of the new school year and the disruption caused by the *Chagim*, they had found themselves running out of time to submit for a grant. Early in October, Nicole, Angie and their admissions director were attending a PEJE Assembly in Baltimore. They told themselves that they would sit together on the train coming home and use the three hours to figure out what they were going to do. It was now or never.

That was how Sundays@Senesh was born.

On the train, they talked through whether to launch a nursery school or pre-kindergarten program, something for which they had plenty of space in the new building. While it made great financial sense, they realized that it was not appropriate to compete with the local synagogue pre-schools. They debated whether to resurrect a story-time program for preschoolers which they had tried running during the day. They ruled that out because so few parents had actually come. Creating a meeting space for nannies wasn't really the message they wanted to convey.

As the train headed through Newark, and with the clock ticking down, what they came up with was elegantly simple. As a new mom herself, Angie knew how difficult it was during the winter months to find a play space in the local neighborhood on a Sunday morning. At that time of the week, the school was completely empty. It would not cost a lot of money to invest in some highly quality indoor play equipment and open up the space to local families. If they asked people to pay a small fee, they could provide a simple breakfast too.

As the idea took shape, they wondered if it was Jewish enough. Providing play-space was hardly cutting-edge Jewish education. Talking through their ideas over the next couple of days, they were encouraged to add a Jewish music and movement class that they could run at the same time, although they all agreed that the point of this initiative was not so much the content of what they offered, but the statement they were making: they were opening up the school to the community. There would likely be a few non-Jewish families that would take advantage of the facility — as happens at JCCs — but more important than anything else, they would be bringing Jewish families into the school who would otherwise be hard to reach. They would break down some psychological barriers in doing so, and once on the premises those parents would get a glimpse of what happened inside the building through the artwork on display and the books on the library shelves.

The grant application was successful, and the program, *Sundays@Senesh* — launched the following January — exceeded all expectations. Over a four-month period, on any given week, more than 50 families came in to the school. It seemed that they had tapped an unmet local need with minimal fuss.

After the program had wound down at the end of that winter season, the school's leadership team together with the board of trustees took stock of the experience. All involved agreed that they needed to think about how to build on the phenomenon they had experienced. Not one person around the table felt that it was a distraction from the school's core business or that it might become a potential drain on resources. The consensus was that a program such as this enabled the school to fulfill its mission more fully. Of course, getting new families into the building might help enrollment down the line, and raising the school's profile in the community could only be of benefit too, but more important, figuring out how to serve the widest possible community was an ultimate value to which they had always been committed and might now have the resources to devote.

This charge gave Nicole and Angie even more reason to explore ways of extending the school's reach into the community. These explorations brought them in contact with someone who they quickly realized was a kindred spirit. Harlene Appelman, Executive Director of the Covenant Foundation, had

long felt that if Jewish day schools were to make a case for communal support, they needed to serve the whole community and not just those willing to pay their fees. Appelman had a vision for day school education that paralleled what she had observed in the world of museum education. The first task of museums had once been conceived as the preservation and display of ancient artifacts. Today, the most successful museums were interactive places that took the lead in community education. Day schools, she felt, needed to make a similar shift: from curating the past to engaging the community. What was emerging at Hannah Senesh was completely aligned with her thinking. In the past, when she had tried to encourage schools to think of themselves in these terms, they had generally complained that they already had too much on their plates to take on these additional responsibilities. They resisted, saying simply that community engagement was not a part of their mission; their task was to educate children whose parents were paying for a superior product.

Nicole and Angie had not anticipated such a positive response from the foundation, but it was evident from their first conversations with Harlene and her staff that they were very much aligned with one another. Of course, even with an indication of strong foundation interest in the direction they were headed, there was still a great deal of work to do. How — programmatically — might they turn a vision of the school as a community hub into reality? How, in turn, could they translate that into a fundable grant proposal? They needed also to clarify how the conception they were developing was not simply an “outreach” model in which the school unidirectionally sold a product to potential clients. They were committed to encouraging a more relational approach which built shared community between the school and the wider neighborhood beyond.

As they set about developing a grant proposal, they consulted widely in the community as well as among their own parents about what people were looking for from the school. They learned from current parents that they desired a program that would keep their children connected even after they graduated at the end of 8th grade. They talked to the participants in the *Sundays@Senesh* program whose children were not enrolled at the school, and learned from them that they would really appreciate special holiday programming. They learned from a parent survey that a sizable number particularly

wanted an opportunity to learn Hebrew so that they could keep up with their children. There seemed to be demand also for sophisticated Jewish adult education programming; this suggested the existence of a critical mass interested in something that could also serve the wider community. At the same time, these inquiries made clear that they should not launch a weekly minyan at the school, whether for their own parents or for others. Even if it would be post-denominational in some way, it would position the school in direct competition with the local synagogues and would undercut what, they learned, was a special aspect of the school's appeal as an open and diverse Jewish communal space.

In the end, after extensive consultation, they applied to the foundation for a grant that provided for exploring which of these new programs would best serve their goals rather than presuming to know a priori what was likely to work. That way they could also test whether it was possible to bring to life the relational vision of community that animated their activity.

In January 2012, they learned that their application was successful. Instead of immediately pushing forward with program ideas, they spent much of the next six months thoroughly consulting with potential program providers about what they might offer. A couple of months after receiving the grant, they dipped their toes in the water with a first holiday-themed Sunday program, "Step Into: Passover." More than 300 people came. The great majority had no prior connection with the school. It was like striking gold.

By September 2012, they were ready to launch. Instead of proposing to deliver the program themselves, they contracted with a wide diversity of partners. For adult programming they brought in educators from the Melton Graduate Program, Mechon Hadar, the Drisha Institute and Romemu, some of the most successful program providers in New York. They offered Israeli dancing each week as well as Jewish meditation sessions. Once a month, they partnered with social workers connected to UJA-Federation to provide parenting workshops. All of this was on top of a one-night-a-week program for teens, a one-morning-a-week Hebrew course for parents, and the Sunday morning play-space for preschoolers.

Over the summer, they produced a compact, glossy 12-page program booklet that provided details about all of the program elements in SmallCity@Senesh. As the booklet's introductory blurb explained, "From a Sunday morning play-space to weekday evening text study, SmallCity@Senesh provides a wide range of opportunities for taking part in Jewish learning and community experiences in an open educational environment." It was absolutely clear that the program was open to all members of the greater Brownstone Brooklyn community. They promoted the program using every available channel.

For a school to be offering such a rich menu of experiences was almost unprecedented. It brought to life a radically different vision of what a Jewish day school might be. But in some circles this vision was controversial.

Since the second half of the 20th century, with the move of Jews to the suburbs and the rise of synagogue-based supplementary schools, synagogues and day schools often had an uneasy relationship. Over time, day schools increasingly drew highly-engaged families away from congregational schools, first from Orthodox congregations and then from liberal ones. Many congregations ended up closing or downsizing their supplementary programs. As free-standing institutions, day schools frequently had easier access to federated community funds than did denominationally affiliated congregations. In the main, the relationship between shuls and schools was a

complementary one (it was assumed that more intensive Jewish education would produce higher rates of synagogue participation), but these relationships could easily become competitive, especially when schools began to provide programming for adults or when, in economically challenging times, parents were less ready to pay synagogue fees once they had paid out tuition at day schools.

The launch of the SmallCity@Senesh initiative exacerbated some of these tensions. Although the program pointedly avoided competing directly with the core services provided by local synagogues, there were synagogue leaders within the

general vicinity of Hannah Senesh who perceived the school to be entering a world that was their own traditional purview. They perceived the school's holiday-themed programming to be drawing away a population with which they sought to connect. Viewing the slick materials that promoted SmallCity, they complained that the school could raise funds from sources that synagogues were not able to access. They felt that they were being faced by a new competitor on an uneven playing field.

The school leadership was sympathetic to the emotions that underlay these responses, not least because there were many members of the parent body who were key synagogue stakeholders themselves. But the overriding response was that cultivating Jewish engagement was not a zero-sum game. Federation data revealed that on a wide range of indicators, Jewish adults in Brownstone Brooklyn exhibited the lowest rates of Jewish engagement among all of Brooklyn's eight counties. The school was trying not to take a bite out of a limited pie but to grow it. SmallCity was seeking to increase the number of engaged Jews for the long-term benefit of all Jewish institutions, synagogues included.

Simmering beneath the surface of the critique of SmallCity was concern about another nascent development at the school. Since the school's relocation in 2007, and the dedication of a modest and tastefully designed *bet kenesset* in the building, a small number of families had begun to mark their child's *bat mitzvah* or *bar mitzvah* in the school. For these families, part of the motivation for doing so was so that they were entirely free to choreograph their own service. For example, for one religiously Orthodox family whose child was no longer at the school, it meant that their daughter could read Torah at her *bat mitzvah*, something that her synagogue would not permit. For other families, the reasons for holding a service at the school were more far-reaching: simply put, the school was the most significant Jewish institution in their lives. From the perspective of these families, why would they sign up at a synagogue with which they had barely any connection to mark so important a moment? Their Jewish lives revolved around the school; the school was the Jewish community within which they felt most comfortable. That's where they wanted to express their child's transition to Jewish adulthood. Sentiments

like these constituted an acute challenge to established patterns of communal life, and no doubt played in to some of the reaction to the launch of SmallCity.

If the changing identity of the Hannah Senesh Community Day School posed some ultimate questions about the relationships between some of the central institutions of American Jewish life, there were also those within the day school world who were skeptical about what the school was becoming. Some of Nicole's colleagues in other day schools openly wondered whether Hannah Senesh might be investing in the "community" piece of the school's identity at the expense of its role as a "school." Even if the finances might work — and there would be an effective firewall between school and community enterprises — surely the attention invested in serving the broader community would reduce attentiveness to their first order of responsibility, to providing parents with the highest quality of education for which they were paying. Ultimately, Hannah Senesh was in danger of losing sight of the fact that it was established as a school and not as a community center.

For Nicole, Angie and other leaders at the school, these criticisms misread what they perceived as a far greater challenge for day schools: how to make schools relevant to the greater Jewish community beyond a few highly engaged enclaves. On one level, the financial implications were dramatic. As they had found from their own experience, in the long run it would be terrifically challenging to raise money for a K–8 school that served generally privileged families. Schools had to be doing more. Somehow, they had to be more relevant.

Beyond the finances, there was something else here too: A belief supported by an emerging literature in general education regarding the profound role played by schools in the lives of communities. Schools, it had been found, could be generators of cultural and economic life. If, in the short term, they seemed to soak up limited resources, there was evidence that in the medium and long-term, they enriched cultural life, stimulated demographic growth and created wealth for all of those in their immediate vicinity. It was through producing such outcomes that day schools could continue to be relevant.

If these seemed like grandiose claims to be making at a school that was only 18 years old, and on the back of an initiative that had run for only three years, other developments at the

school provided further support for such assumptions. In the summer before the launch of SmallCity, as part of a different initiative, the school ran a Hebrew immersion day camp for children of all ages. The camp ran for two weeks from the end of the school year until the start of the residential camp season. It was fully subscribed within 24 hours. During that first year only Senesh students were enrolled. In the second year, enrollees were accepted from outside the school too. Having got the program basics right in the first year, the school was ready now to serve a wider community.

This was the paradigm that the school was building. The brief history of the Hannah Senesh Community Day School suggested that if you didn't operate a Jewish day school as a fortress that hoarded both knowledge and healthy relationships behind high walls but instead developed it as a reservoir of cultural and social capital, it could become a vital institution for all of the Jewish community. The experiment was still ongoing, but it was possible that the results would have lasting significance.

Questions for Further Consideration:

1. The case begins with the description of a family programming event geared to the community at large. Is this idea appealing to you? Why? What assumptions would you have to hold to justify sponsoring events like this?
2. What factors might mitigate for and against a community-wide program at your school? Does serving the community serve the school? Is this a role that is incumbent on all Jewish day schools?
3. In your view, do day schools have a responsibility to build community or some social experience among their families whether or not they're defined as "Community schools"? How important is it that they provide opportunities for parents to deepen their connections with the Jewish community?
4. The case describes Hannah Senesh as an "emerging center for Jewish life." What are the components you would point to that speak to this characterization? Are there needs in your community that it makes sense for your school to fill? Are there partners to work with in this endeavor? Are there competitors?
5. Do you think it would have been possible or appropriate for Hannah Senesh to have developed in this way without the support of outside agencies and foundations?
6. How probable is it that the evolution of Hannah Senesh provoked conflicts in the community that might not have been mentioned in the case? How likely are such conflicts to occur in your own community if your school was to develop in this way?
7. Try this thought experiment. Even if you have no actual aspirations to become a community center, what structures or programs would need to be in place to support the concept? Can you see any value to these given your current actual aspirations?
8. Do you share the concern expressed that donors might lose interest in supporting a school for a small percentage of privileged children? How do you address this concern?
9. The case describes a school very much in sync with the ethos and values of its surrounding neighborhoods. Their understanding of their neighborhood is enhanced by a recent Jewish population study. When you look at your own school, what data would you need to make sense of the culture of the community in which you are situated? How might you obtain that data? How well matched do you think you are with your surroundings (consider as many domains of your school life as seem relevant: pedagogical approach, curriculum, hiring practices, Jewish ideology, etc.)? What, if anything, would you shift internally to create greater alignment?
10. At various moments in the case, the school's walls are described metaphorically as porous, or as intended to include rather than exclude the larger community. How porous are your own school walls? What are the boundaries between your school and the broader Jewish and general community?