

Research Report

Career Trajectories of Jewish Educators in the United States

# Preparing for Entry

Fresh Perspectives on  
How and Why People  
Become Jewish Educators



Prepared by  
Rosov Consulting

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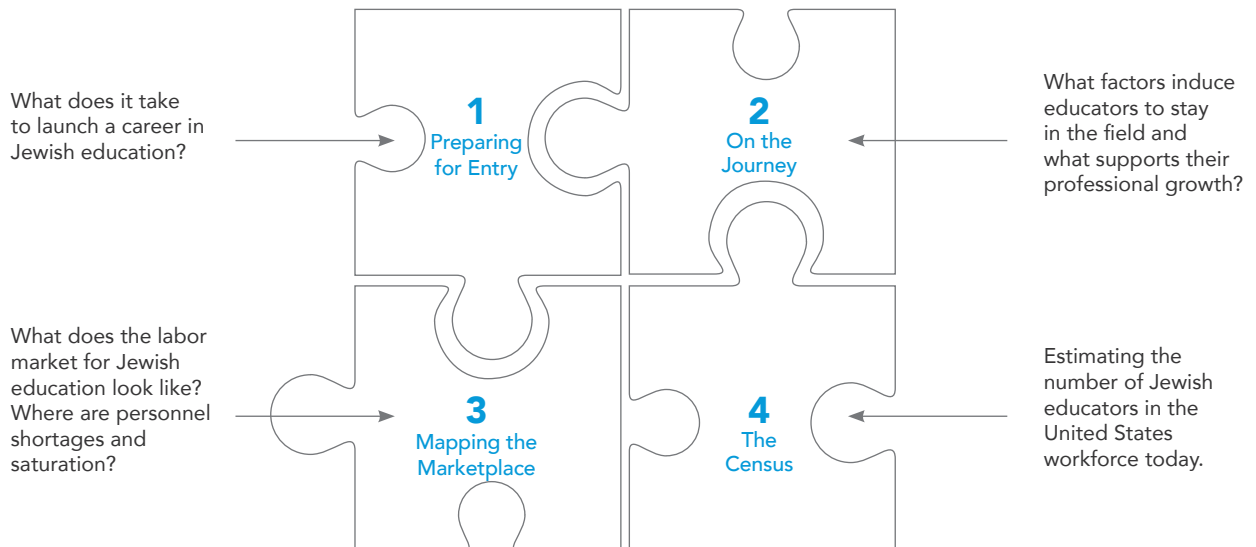
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# About this Report

The Collaborative for Applied Studies in Jewish Education (CASJE) is a community of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers dedicated to improving the quality of knowledge that can be used to guide Jewish education and learning. CASJE is committed to developing high quality research that is responsive to critical questions across diverse sectors in Jewish education. CASJE's programmatic and fiduciary home is located at the George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD).

This report is the first in a series of publications that shares findings from the CASJE Career Trajectories of Jewish Educators Study. The larger CASJE study seeks to understand the recruitment, retention and development of Jewish educators in the United States. You can read more about this study at [www.casje.org](http://www.casje.org).

The Career Trajectories Study is organized around four central research questions:



*Preparing for Entry* is designed to understand the pathways by which people enter the field of Jewish education and identify factors that advance or inhibit launching a career in Jewish education. In 2020 CASJE published the white paper [Preparing for Entry: Concepts That Support a Study of What It Takes to Launch a Career in Jewish Education](#), which lays out the framework and key questions that underlie this inquiry and serves as a companion to this report.

# Acknowledgments

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# Executive Summary

What does it take to launch a career in Jewish education and what deters promising individuals from doing so? These questions shape the Preparing for Entry strand of CASJE's Career Trajectory in Jewish Education study. The quantitative and qualitative data for this strand come from a comparison of three populations:

1. those who have taken up positions in the field of Jewish education and intend to remain (n = 534);
2. those who started work in the field of Jewish education, left within five years, and do not intend to return (n = 800); and
3. those who never worked as Jewish educators but had reasonable potential of doing so, having participated in programs during their college years from which high proportions of Jewish educators tend to come (n = 738).

The study confirms a theoretical model that the route to beginning a career in Jewish education is a funnel-like process. In this process, people are drawn to work as Jewish educators from a broad range of institutions and experiences and then—as their numbers diminish—pass through a steadily narrower set of frameworks that ease them toward the funnel's end: a longer-term career in the field. Only a minority of individuals pass all the way through this funnel to a career in Jewish education.

The study highlights the various forks in the road—structural and circumstantial inhibitors—that result in some individuals no longer pursuing work in Jewish education while others continue to do so. These findings help challenge a longstanding hypothesis that entry into this field is a matter of a passion for Jewish education triumphing over the poor material rewards offered. In deconstructing the factors that inhibit entry to the field, the study provides fresh data about the multiple ways in which pre-service preparation provides emergent Jewish educators with resources to sustain their progress to a career in Jewish education.

## Key Findings

### How People Become Jewish Educators

Jewish educators (especially those working in supplementary schools, day schools, and early childhood settings) more commonly had Jewish educator role models or positive influences within their families and their communities during their younger years than others did; they had access to deep Jewish cultural capital and social capital. If they also participated in an Enabling Opportunity (a program designed with the specific intent of

translating an already stimulated appetite to work as a Jewish educator into a willingness and ability to be one), they were primed for success.

Participating in an Enabling Opportunity (a pre-service program) enhances early career educators' capacities to survive and thrive in their work. However, fewer than half of respondents currently working as Jewish educators participated in such an experience. Of those who began work as Jewish educators and then left the field within five years, fewer than a quarter participated in an Enabling Opportunity.

Jewish educators who reported having earlier pursued a career in another field before switching to Jewish education were also more likely to remain in the field. Functionally, working in another field seems to serve the same role as experiencing an Enabling Opportunity in terms of helping people thrive in the workplace.

Prospective Jewish educators often have a narrow view of the field based on their own limited experiences of Jewish education as children. They cannot imagine the wide variety of opportunities for work in various sectors, and so don't choose to explore opportunities in a field they presume is out of sync with their values and interests.

Two types of inhibitors discourage individuals from working or making a career in the field of Jewish education: (i) structural inhibitors which are built into the field, such as poor financial compensation, limited benefits, and parochialism; and (ii) circumstantial inhibitors, the specific and often unexpected dynamics of particular workplaces.

Those who never worked as Jewish educators or did but do not plan to return are more frequently put off by structural inhibitors than are Jewish educators; Jewish educators draw on certain values and passions that better enable them to tolerate the structural inhibitors that drive most people away. Circumstantial inhibitors are as likely to drive away Jewish educators from their workplaces as they are to deter employees in other fields. These inhibitors have far-reaching consequences, but could potentially be overcome through appropriate attention to workplace culture and dynamics.

## Why People Become Jewish Educators

Those who have become Jewish educators are distinct from those who are not Jewish educators, or from those who left the field after a brief stay, in their passions and their

values. Jewish educators are moved by a more intense desire to contribute to others, and they are also animated by a sense of Jewish mission—of wanting to contribute to the Jewish community. They often have a passion for Jewish learning which they want to share with others, helped by relatively high levels of Jewish and Hebrew knowledge.

Survey data demonstrated that those who work as Jewish educators and who plan to remain in this field are motivated by a fusion of passions and commitments. Interview data demonstrate how this fusion feeds their resilience in the face of the structural inhibitors that deflect others who are less motivated.

Individuals who choose the path of Jewish education are aware of the challenging workplace conditions in which many of them work. Their idealism is not synonymous with naivety. In fact, Jewish educators are more fully aware of these challenges than those who have never worked in the field. They rate features of the Jewish settings in which they work less favorably than those who have limited or no experience of them.

The study reveals four “types” of people who could have or did become a career Jewish educator. Each type suggests a distinct policy response.

### ① Fellow Travelers

**Findings:** Many people had reasonable potential of becoming Jewish educators before their professional plans solidified in different directions. They worked at camp over many summers, staffed trips to Israel, served as part-time educators in supplementary schools, or spent the first couple of years after graduation working for a youth organization. These “fellow travelers” view with great affection their time as volunteer, part-time, or short-term Jewish educators.

**Implications:** These “fellow travelers” should be mobilized in support of Jewish education, a profession they hold in high regard. They can help change perceptions of this field and ultimately contribute to an improvement in its conditions by performing the roles of advocates, volunteer leaders, and philanthropic supporters.

## ② Looking for a Map

**Findings:** Interview data reveal a further type who today resembles a potential “fellow traveler” but who at some point might have gone further toward entering the field. These people were interested in work in Jewish education but had a limited sense of what roles Jewish educators perform. In this respect, they have been constrained by their own “extended apprenticeship of observation,” the limited extent of their own early experiences of Jewish education.

**Implications:** A general campaign to communicate the great variety of opportunities and roles in the field could challenge such preconceptions. The more prospective educators are aware of the scope of the work of a Jewish educator, the more likely these people will see beyond the limited horizons of their own past experiences.

## ③ Turning Around on the Highway

**Findings:** Almost 40% of our analytical sample started work as Jewish educators before deciding, during their first five years on the job, that they’d had enough. While some of these people might not have made successful careers in the field, others would likely have found their way to make a positive contribution. Qualitative data suggest that most of these people, while starting out on their employment journey, were deterred by circumstantial inhibitors, challenges that derived from the specific situations in particular workplaces.

**Implications:** The impacts of circumstantial inhibitors can be ameliorated most commonly through strong induction programs which cultivate powerful intellectual and emotional assets that help with resisting such challenges. These practices should be extended from day schools, where they have become increasingly normative, to other venues and sectors of Jewish education.

## ④ Equipped for the Journey

**Findings:** Many emergent educators have the capacity to keep going on the journey as a Jewish educator thanks to their participation in an Enabling Opportunity, a pre-service framework that provides a structured foretaste of what lies ahead, builds the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective, and nurtures networks of support that can make a decisive difference when times are hard. However, most starting educators have not benefited from such an experience.

**Implications:** More readily accessible pre-service degree and certificate granting programs or fellowships would provide greater numbers of Jewish educators with the emotional provisions and intellectual equipment to sustain them on the journey of Jewish education.

# Background

## Why Study Entry to the Field of Jewish Education?

To be an educator is, as scholar Tom Barone memorably put it, to touch eternity.<sup>1</sup> To be a Jewish educator is to enable others to think, feel, and act differently—today, tomorrow, or sometime in the future—through an encounter with one of the world’s oldest and still dynamic cultural traditions. The Jewish educator reaches both into the distant past and toward an unbounded future.

To be an educator means, then, entering a field of work rich with meaning. And yet many who choose to do this work do not stick with it for long, and many more who could do this work choose not to start at all. The reasons why people resist what David Hansen characterizes as “the call to teach”<sup>2</sup> have long been known and have been widely documented: Most Jewish educators are poorly paid, receive limited financial benefits, and often find themselves facing emotionally freighted challenges.<sup>3</sup> Educators who work with children frequently need to motivate a resistant or disinterested audience.

Writing sixty-five years ago in a special issue of the journal *Jewish Education* devoted to the “personnel crisis in Jewish education,” editor Albert Schoolman framed the challenge in a manner that has echoed down the years. He complained that, at its root, the educator recruitment challenge derives from “a false dichotomy between *idealism* and *economic sufficiency* as professional motivation for Jewish education personnel.”<sup>4</sup> The work of Jewish education may indeed have ultimate significance, but people are put off entering this field by poor pay and conditions, circumstances that compare poorly with the field of general education let alone other professions. Leading Jewish educator Neal Kaunfer sardonically expressed the same tension about twenty years later: Jewish education, he proposed, “is an unrewarding profession financially and in terms of status. It is also part-time work. The result of all this is that only the very dedicated or the very incompetent would choose to enter the field.”<sup>5</sup>

The same trope has been repeated at regular intervals over the intervening years. A central theme in “A Time to Act,” the 1991 report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, was that until the field is more fully professionalized, it will not attract sufficient numbers of serious people.<sup>6</sup> Ten years later, with the release of the Educators in Jewish Schools Study (EJSS), a similar argument was made: until educators are paid in a manner that reflects their contribution to Jewish communal wellbeing, the best and brightest will continue to take their talents elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

At the level of specific venues for Jewish education, scholars have found some exceptions to these general rules. Alex Pomson highlighted some context-specific “parochial” factors that lead certain educators to *prefer* to work in Jewish day schools rather than in better paid public school settings; they enjoy how the school year is shaped by the Jewish calendar and how Hebrew can frequently be heard in corridors and classrooms.<sup>8</sup> Sharon Feiman-Nemser found that supplementary school teaching, because of its part-time and often avocational character, also involved a different calculus of costs and benefits, especially for those whose primary work took place elsewhere or who wanted

1 Barone, 2001.

2 Hansen, 1995

3 These forbidding features of the field have been documented with depressing consistency over the course of decades. See Gamoran et al., 2009; Kress & Ben Avi, 2007; Ingall, 2006; Rosov Consulting, 2021.

4 Schoolman, 1957, 3.

5 Quoted by Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976, 208.

6 Commission on Jewish Education in North America, 1991.

7 Kress & Ben Avie, 2007.

8 Pomson, 2005.

to deepen their own Jewish learning.<sup>9</sup> Finally, focusing on a special population of elite college graduates, Eran Tamir showed how some of those who choose to become day school educators moved beyond the weighing of intrinsic and ancillary rewards to something larger, what he calls an aspiration to become change agents.<sup>10</sup>

These exceptions have not altered the narrative surrounding the recruitment challenge in Jewish education. In fact, that narrative has been reinforced by the framing of the recruitment challenge in public schooling as an “economic labor market” problem in which candidates weigh compensation levels, working conditions, and intrinsic rewards offered by teaching as compared with other occupations (the influential formulation of the Rand Corporation).<sup>11</sup> More than half a century on from Schoolman’s gloomy judgments, it is appropriate therefore to ask whether the challenge of recruiting sufficient quality personnel to the field of Jewish education still comes down, in large part, to candidates having to choose between material and existential rewards. Is this how prospective Jewish educators see their options today? Or are there additional dimensions to this phenomenon that might suggest new strategies for addressing a problem that has challenged the organized Jewish community since the early 1950s? This is the puzzle underpinning the “Preparing for Entry” strand of CASJE’s exploration of the career trajectories of Jewish educators.

CASJE’s investigation of the career trajectories of Jewish educators includes four strands: (1) “Preparing for Entry”—an investigation of what it takes to launch a career in Jewish education and, in turn, what interventions encourage promising candidates to seek and take up employment as Jewish educators; (2) “On the Journey”—a study of those who remain in the field of Jewish education for more than five years, why they stay, and how they grow; (3) “Mapping the Market”—a study of the employers of Jewish educators and of those who prepare educators for the field or who provide professional support for them once they have started to work; and (4) a “Census” of Jewish educators, an effort to estimate the size and scope of the Jewish education workforce.

**Fundamentally, then, the questions addressed in this report are: what does it take to launch a career in Jewish education and what deters promising individuals from doing so?** In turn, these questions prompt others with a more applied orientation: What might make the field more attractive to promising candidates? How can greater numbers of appropriately disposed individuals be encouraged to take up this work?

9 Kaplowitz, & Feiman-Nemser, 1997.

10 Tamir, 2014.

11 Guarino et al., 2006.

# Sample and Methods

Consistent with the other strands of this research study, we adopt a broad definition of who is a Jewish educator. We define Jewish educators as paid professionals who work directly with people of any age who identify as Jews, in settings—whether virtual, brick-and-mortar, or outdoor—that aim to help participants find special meaning in Jewish texts, experiences, and associations. (We characterize anyone engaged in these efforts as a Jewish educator even if they themselves use terms like “Jewish engagement” or “Jewish meaning making” to describe their work.)

When we refer to Jewish educators, we specifically mean those who work in one of five primary sectors:

**Sector 1:** *Formal Jewish education* (day schools, early childhood education, supplemental schools);

**Sector 2:** *Informal/experiential settings* including both immersive (e.g., camp) and non-immersive (e.g., youth organizations, Jewish community centers);

**Sector 3:** *Engagement, social justice, and innovation organizations* (e.g., Jewish Studio Project, Moishe House, OneTable);

**Sector 4:** *Communal organizations* that may employ someone in a related role (e.g., scholars in residence at Federations or Jewish educators at Jewish Family Services); and

**Sector 5:** *Non-organizational networks and online learning* (e.g., independent B’nai Mitzvah or Hebrew tutors).

Until now, almost every investigation of Jewish educator recruitment and entry—into whichever of the five sectors enumerated above—has sought to draw conclusions by retrospectively studying those who have already become Jewish educators. The assumption has been that by studying the routes taken by those who entered the field, it is possible to discern general principles about how they and others like them came to be there.<sup>12</sup> While it is certainly efficient to proceed in this way, since the population of current or recent educators can be easily identified and relatively effortlessly recruited as research subjects, the data gathered from this population have only limited utility. In telling the story of those who did indeed enter the field, this methodological approach reinforces the status quo. It sheds little light on those who might have entered the field but did not. This research-design challenge for Jewish education has also been a feature of most research into educator recruitment in general education.<sup>13</sup>

## Reasonable Potential of Becoming a Jewish Educator

This study takes a different approach. It examines the choices and trajectories of those who at some point had reasonable potential of becoming Jewish educators; it looks at those who are in the early stages of their careers as Jewish educators, those who began work as Jewish educators and left the field, and those who never considered work in this field. We characterize this population as having “reasonable potential” because it is composed of individuals who during or soon after their college years participated in programs in which, historically, high proportions of Jewish educators have taken part even while most of the alumni have not become Jewish educators. We label such frameworks **Seed Sectors** because although their primary purpose is

<sup>12</sup> See Goodman, 2000; Sarna, 1994; Pomson, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> See Richardson & Watt, 2006; Jungert et al., 2014. There are some exceptions that explore these issues with samples that only include those who became educators. See Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000.

**not** to prepare participants to become professional Jewish educators, *these experiences implant in some of their participants a desire to explore Jewish education as a field of work, at least as a short-term occupation.*

The great majority of the participants in this study (86%) participated in at least one of these Seed Sector frameworks up to 10 years prior to the study's launch. The survey respondents drawn from these frameworks include former Birthright Israel *madrachim* (trip leaders), Foundation for Jewish Camp Cornerstone Fellows, Hillel student leaders on campus, NCSY advisors, and Masa Israel Teaching Fellows. At least 200 alumni of each of these programs responded to the survey and often many more. (The full list of participating Seed Sector programs can be found in Appendix A.)

The survey was also fielded to two further populations, some of whom may not have participated in a Seed Sector. One group was made up of alumni of programs whose primary function is to prepare individuals to enter or advance in the field of Jewish education. These program frameworks included nine graduate-level or university-based, pre-service programs in Jewish education, and pre-service/induction fellowships or internships in various sectors of Jewish education. We characterize these as **Enabling Opportunities**: *programmatically and training frameworks designed to translate an already stimulated appetite to work as a Jewish educator into a readiness and capacity to be one.* The greatest numbers of survey respondents from these frameworks include Camp Ramah's Kerem and Weiner Fellows, Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration alumni, and Dorot Fellows, with more than 100 respondents responding from each of these.

Finally, the survey was also sent to 450 individuals who had responded to CASJE's "On the Journey" survey and were found at that time to have been working as Jewish educators for five years or fewer. These **early career educators** were ineligible for that study but were included in the sampling frame for this inquiry.

## A Focus on Career Entry

This is a study of individuals at a career entry stage of their lives. The concepts that animate this study were described at length in "[Preparing for Entry: Concepts that Support a Study of the Professional Trajectories of Jewish Educators](#)."<sup>14</sup> In brief, the study is concerned above all with what stimulates and deters people from entering Jewish education as a field of employment, what resources and assets help advance their entry, what programs and experiences enable them to enter the field, and what forces and factors inhibit their entry. These concepts were operationalized within the "Preparing for Entry" survey (see Appendix E for the survey instrument).

The survey was fielded to alumni of 14 Seed Sector or Enabling Opportunity organizations between July and September 2020 (see Appendix A for a full list of fielding partners). In total, 4,563 individuals responded to the survey. Seed Sector response rates were between 7% and 37% (yielding 1,987 respondents). Enabling Opportunity response rates were between 23% and 74% (yielding 345 respondents). The response rate among those who previously responded to CASJE's "On the Journey" survey was 23.5% (yielding 81 respondents). The higher response rates among Enabling Opportunity alumni likely reflects the degree to which generally those who graduate such programs are more proximate to the field of Jewish education than are alumni of Seed Sectors, programs that serve a wider swathe of population.

<sup>14</sup> Rosov Consulting, 2020.

Responses included in the analysis were from individuals who (a) graduated college up to ten years previously, (b) invested time and resources in preparing to become Jewish educators within the previous ten years, or (c) took up work as Jewish educators within the previous five years. The research team assumed that the scope of ten years is a reasonable time limit within which people will be able to reliably remember the issues they weighed and the circumstances in which they were situated when making post-high school, college, and post-college work choices. If respondents were career changers who left college long ago and are currently working in Jewish education, they were included if they had been in the field for fewer than five years, that is, if they were still at a career-entry stage in Jewish education like the other members of the analysis sample.

Based on these criteria, 2,150 individuals were removed from the analysis, leaving an analysis sample of 2,072 respondents with the following composition:<sup>15</sup>

- Current Jewish educator and intending to remain: 534 people (of whom 306 were in Sector 1, 120 in Sector 2, 44 in Sector 3, 20 in Sector 4, and 12 in Sector 5)
- Previously worked as a Jewish educator and not intending to return: 800 people<sup>16</sup> (of whom 383 had been in Sector 1, 288 in Sector 2, 55 in Sector 3, 16 in Sector 4, and 16 in Sector 5)
- Never worked as Jewish educator: 738 people<sup>17</sup>

Further descriptive information about the makeup of the quantitative analysis sample can be found in Appendix B, including details of educational backgrounds, gender breakdown, age, and denominational orientation. A summary of the analytical differences between these groups is found in Appendix D.

A subsample of fifty survey respondents was also interviewed, once each, drawn from those who indicated readiness to be interviewed when responding to the survey. (A copy of the interview transcript can be found in Appendix F.) Interviewees were selected to ensure inclusion of members of the following populations identified as meriting special interest during survey data analysis:

- A. Seed Sector alumni who considered working as Jewish educators but did not do so. (n = 10)
- B. Seed Sector alumni who never considered working as Jewish educators. (n = 3)
- C. Seed Sector alumni who work as Jewish educators and intended to do so from an early age. (n = 5)
- D. Enabling Opportunity alumni who did not take up work as Jewish educators. (n = 9)
- E. Enabling Opportunity alumni who work as Jewish educators. (n = 9)
- F. Individuals who work as Jewish educators and bypassed Enabling Opportunities. (n = 6)
- G. Individuals who worked as Jewish educators and left during their first five years in the field. (n = 8)

As can be seen, individuals who today work as Jewish educators (Groups #C, #E, #F) made up 40% of the interview sample. The oversampling of this population came from a desire to fully understand the pathways and choices of those who have indeed entered the field of Jewish education, ultimately the population of greatest interest in this study.

<sup>15</sup> Most of those who were excluded from the sample had either been in the workforce for more than ten years or had not entered the workforce yet.

<sup>16</sup> We recognize that in some venues, especially those serving young people such as youth-serving organizations and summer camps, most educators do not work for more than five years post college. By classifying such people as “no longer working in the field,” or as having “previously worked as a Jewish educator,” we do not infer that such people are “drop-outs” or “failures” in relation to the field of Jewish education. We are rather making a factual demarcation that these individuals now work in another field and do not intend to return. As will be seen below, no matter how deep their commitments might have been during the years they worked as Jewish educators, their values and attitudes do, however, often differ from those who are currently working in the field and plan to stay.

<sup>17</sup> Regression Analysis was conducted comparing, first, those who are currently and intend to remain Jewish educators with those who previously worked as a Jewish educator and do not intend to return, and then comparing those who are currently and intend to remain Jewish educators with those who never worked as Jewish educators. These analyses are referenced where relevant.

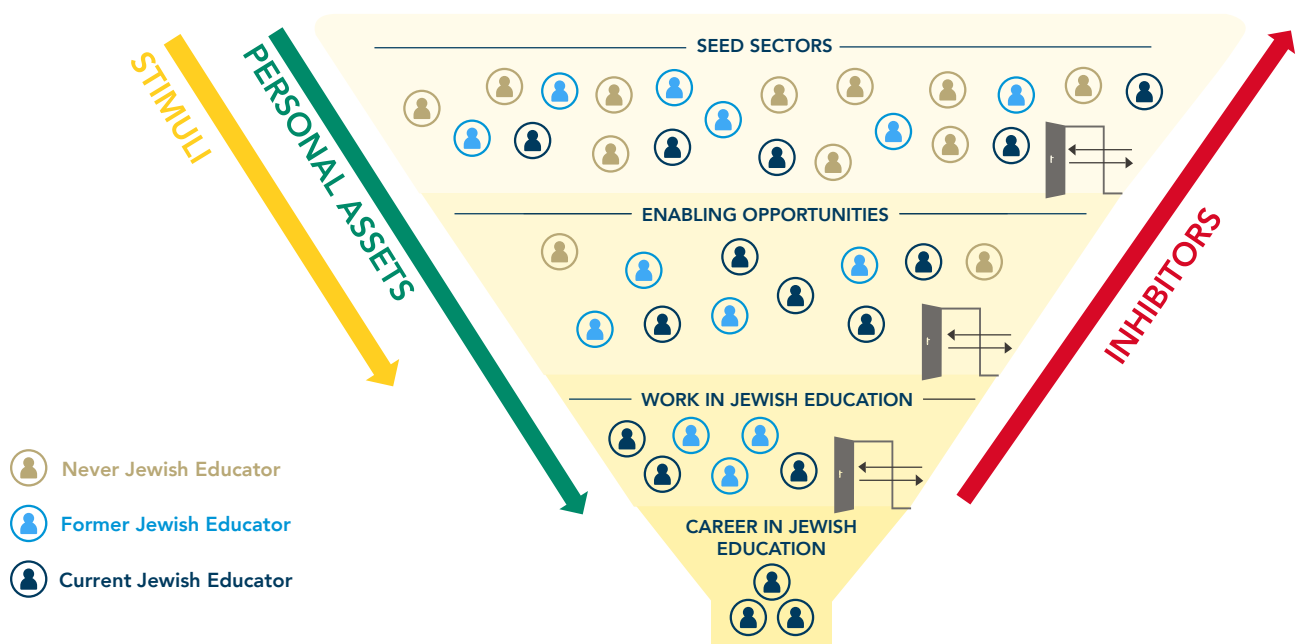
# A Working Model

## How People Become Jewish Educators

It is helpful to think of the route to beginning a career in Jewish education as a funnel-like process.<sup>18</sup> This image captures how people are drawn to work in Jewish education from a broad range of institutions and experiences and then—as their numbers diminish—pass through a steadily narrower set of frameworks that ease them forward to the funnel’s end, a longer-term career in the field. At each level of the process there are opportunities for people to enter and exit should they choose to do so. Consequently, only a minority of individuals pass all the way through this funnel from **Seed Sector** to **Enabling Opportunity**, to **work in Jewish education**, and **finally to a career in the field**. As seen below, there are also many Jewish educators who bypass this funnel process altogether, often because they switch into the field from other domains of work.

This image also helps depict the factors and forces that contribute to whether or not a person starts work as a Jewish educator and then subsequently establishes a career in the field. This is a dynamic that can be depicted as involving the interplay between **Stimuli**, **Personal Assets**, and **Inhibitors** (the arrows in Exhibit 1) supplemented by the catalyzing contribution of **Enabling Opportunities**. These four concepts were derived from our review of the literature pertaining to career entry in any field (not just Jewish education) and have been strongly confirmed by the quantitative and qualitative data we have gathered. The content of these terms, including how we conceptualize “career,” is fully elaborated in the paper, [“Preparing for Entry: Concepts that Support a Study of the Professional Trajectories of Jewish Educators.”](#)

Exhibit 1: A Model of Entry to Jewish Education as a Career



<sup>18</sup> The broad contours of this model were suggested to us by Miriam Heller Stern during the conceptual/design phase of our work. Its various elements have been validated and elaborated by data we gathered.

The primary elements of this model include **four phases** or sequenced experiences:

**Seed Sectors** - Experiences whose primary purpose is not to prepare participants to become professional Jewish educators, and that implant in some of their participants a desire to explore Jewish education as a field of work at least as a short-term occupation.

**Enabling Opportunities** - Frameworks and programs designed with the specific intent of translating an already stimulated appetite to work as a Jewish educator into a willingness and ability to be one.

**Work in Jewish Education** - Employment in a venue for Jewish education, without the subjective commitment of the educator to maintaining this status any longer than the short term.

**Career in Jewish Education** - A state of employment in a venue for Jewish education denoting an extended personal investment in the work, with achievements marked not only through monetary gain but through advancement within the occupational structure.

The model also identifies **three forces** that shape passage toward or away from a career in Jewish education:

**Stimuli** - Influential experiences and inspirational people that whet an interest in and stoke a passion to work as a Jewish educator. These often occur in Seed Sectors but are not limited to them.

**Personal Assets** - Typically, forms of social, cultural, and financial capital that support an individual's readiness and capacity to become a Jewish educator at any point along their pathway to the field. These assets can be substantially developed through participation in Enabling Opportunities.

**Inhibitors** - Circumstances and structures that discourage individuals either from working in the field of Jewish education altogether or from making a career in this field.

In the next sections, we describe the contribution of these forces to the process of taking up or not taking up work as a Jewish educator, as derived from a comparison of the three populations demarcated above (currently a Jewish educator, was previously a Jewish educator, and never was a Jewish educator). When we observe statistically significant differences among the responses of educators who are today working in different sectors within the field of Jewish education, we call them out. When we don't observe such differences, we do not mention them. As will be noted from the lack of comment in what follows, we did not notice any significant gender differences in the phenomena we examined.

## Stimuli – Lighting the Spark

*When I staffed Birthright trips, I recognized how lucky I was to have a Jewish education. There were a lot of students who didn't realize how lucky they were to have a Jewish education—even basic. ... It definitely gave me an appreciation for my education. ... As you go on a trip, you recognize how valuable a Jewish education is. I wished more people had that. I was going to try to find the opportunities that I could to teach and give that to people.*

—Current Jewish Educator

The spark to become a Jewish educator can be ignited at any moment in a person's life, in childhood or somewhat later (on a Birthright trip, for example, as the previous quotation indicates). The appetite to work as an educator is frequently associated with the contribution of an influential

person in one’s life, a family member, an educator, or a Jewish role model. It might come about from some kind of positive or enlightening Jewish experience, quite often “catching the bug” or gaining the sense that “I can do this” at camp or with peers at college. In some cases, negative experiences of Jewish education might also awaken a desire to ensure that others shouldn’t miss out or suffer in the same way. All these possibilities are indicated by the commonplace quality of such “origin stories” in our interview data, of which the following examples are representative. Relatively few people become Jewish educators without someone or something lighting the spark.

*Two decades of horrific Jewish education propelled me so far into wanting to be a Jewish educator. In college, it wasn’t just my rabbi being awesome, it was that I realized Judaism can be awesome. Which then made me realize that if my education didn’t make me feel like Judaism is awesome, then something was wrong with the education. So that was really inspiring.*

—Current Jewish Educator

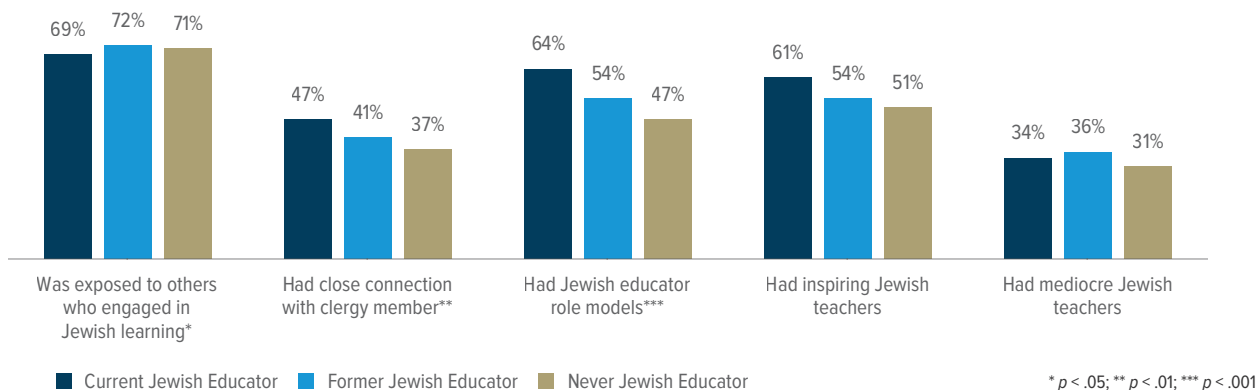
*I think a big thing for me in going toward Jewish education was so much of my own childhood was shaped by participating in Jewish educational experiences. ... So, for me it was such a huge part of my identity growing up that I wanted to help future Jewish generations connect to their Judaism and help them have positive experiences. I know for some kids, religion can be a negative experience, so I wanted to help it be a positive one for kids.*

—Current Jewish Educator

Family background seems to make a difference, too, in inspiring the desire to be an educator. A significantly higher proportion of those in our sample who have worked as Jewish educators report having one or more family member who also worked as a Jewish educator (38% compared with 27% of those who have never worked as Jewish educators).<sup>19</sup> And yet, the quantitative data indicate that overall the backstories of Jewish educators are not consistently distinct from their non-educator peers. As seen in Exhibit 2, while a higher proportion of Jewish educators had close connections with clergy while “growing up” and report having a Jewish educator role model, they do not seem to have experienced mediocre-quality Jewish teachers less frequently, and they actually seem to have been somewhat less exposed to others who engaged in Jewish learning. Evidently, demography is not destiny. It seems almost too obvious to state, but the majority of people who grew up with positive experiences of Jewish education do not become Jewish educators.

## Exhibit 2: Inspiring People and Experiences – Comparing Jewish Educators and Others

Proportion selecting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” in response to the question, “When thinking about your exposure to Jewish educators growing up, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (“Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, 7-pt scale)

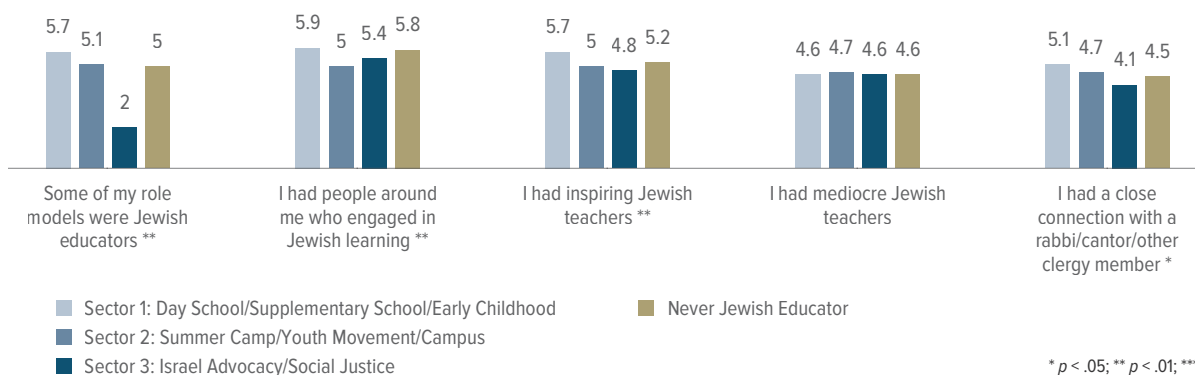


<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, this pattern departs from what is increasingly being seen in general education where there are limited traditions of family career following. See Gubler et al., 2017.

At the same time, further mining the data reveals that the backstories of Jewish educators in Sector 1 (day school, supplementary school, and early childhood education) do differ significantly from peers in other sectors of Jewish education and even more so from those who never became Jewish educators. To summarize the findings shown in Exhibit 3: consistently, Sector 1 educators seem to have been socialized in much more positive, educationally rich, Jewish environments than their peers in other sectors of Jewish education. In fact, when it comes to their background profiles, educators in Sector 3 (those involved in engagement, social justice, and innovation) look a lot like those who have never been Jewish educators at all.

### Exhibit 3: Inspiring People and Experiences – Comparing Different Sectors of Jewish Education

Mean response to the question, “When thinking about your exposure to Jewish educators growing up, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (“Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, 7-pt scale)



## Assets – The Educator’s Knapsack

At the start of this study, we had hypothesized that the extent of an individual’s access to social, cultural, and financial capital would make a difference to their interest, readiness, and capacity to become a Jewish educator. In reality, the picture is more mixed.

### Financial Capital

A quarter of survey respondents indicated that, while growing up, their families’ financial situations at least partially obstructed their participation in Jewish experiences. Nevertheless, these same people are just as commonly Jewish educators today as those coming from wealthier backgrounds (see Appendix B). They may have missed out on expensive formative Jewish experiences that Jewish educators often identify as having ignited the spark—experiences such as day school education, repeated summers at camp, or a year of study in Israel—but this does not seem to have impeded their access to the field.

### Social Capital

We saw above that respondents with family members in Jewish education are more likely to be Jewish educators themselves. We also saw that, when growing up, educators were more closely connected to clergy members. We don’t know, however, to what extent those individuals (family members or Jewish professionals) served as inspirations for becoming a Jewish educator (i.e., stimuli) or as points of connection to opportunities in the field (i.e., sources of social capital). Qualitative data suggest that both possibilities are likely. In the following example, lacking social capital of this kind has clearly been an impediment.

*To be honest, even if I wanted to, I wouldn't know exactly how to get involved in the Jewish world. I did apply for some positions at Hillel, but that didn't go anywhere ... lack of opportunities, but also lack of knowledge of how. I wouldn't know where to start, what I should major in in college? After I do that, where do I go as a career path? What's the chain of events that leads there? And also knowing it's not just becoming a rabbi.*

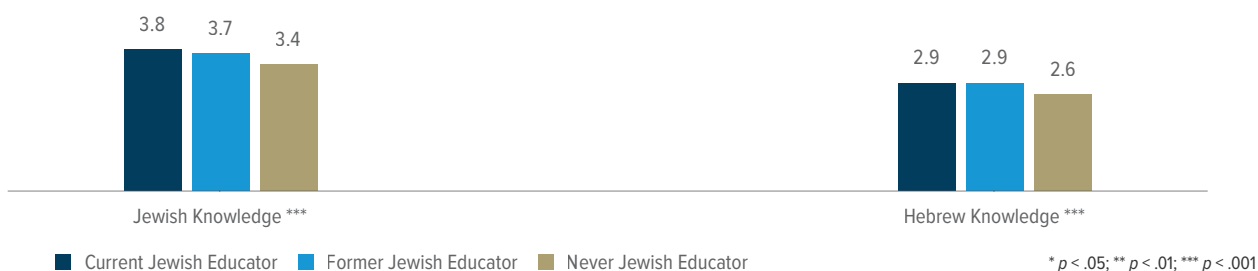
—Never Became a Jewish Educator

## Cultural Capital

The data in respect to cultural capital are less equivocal. Not surprisingly, perhaps, those who work as Jewish educators today are significantly more knowledgeable about Jewish texts, values, and ritual, and they are more proficient in Hebrew than those who have never been Jewish educators but not those who previously had been Jewish educators (see Exhibit 4).

### Exhibit 4: What Jewish Educators Know – Comparing Jewish Educators and Others (Factor Analysis)<sup>18</sup>

Mean response to the question, “When you think about your personal level of [Jewish/Hebrew] knowledge, how true for you are the following statements?” (“Not True at All” to “Very True”, 5-pt scale)



While it is possible that educators may have gained cultural capital of this kind once they were already in the field or preparing for entry, interview data indicate that lacking these forms of knowledge at an earlier time impedes entry to certain sectors of Jewish education at a point when people are exploring such options. It is likely that once people enter the field, the gap opens up further still.

*I guess growing up, Hebrew school—I think I got a good amount of learning, education, but I don't think it was enough. I don't have enough confidence in what I've learned. My Hebrew is weak, my reading is weak, yeah, I learned Torah, and all those things, but I don't know how to lead anything, I know how to follow things. Symbolically, I can say I don't know how to lead a service, whereas my friends who went to private school know how to open the book.*

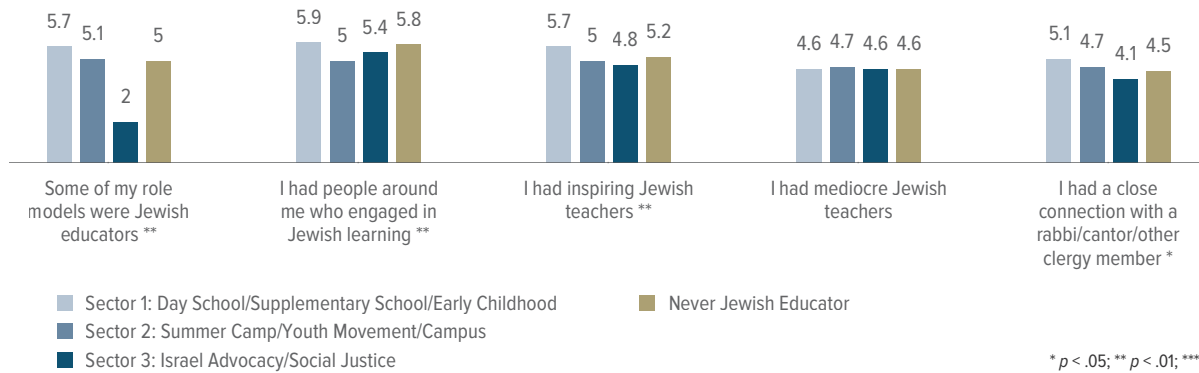
—Never Became a Jewish Educator

When it comes to these two dimensions of cultural capital—Jewish and Hebrew knowledge—current Sector 1 educators also differ significantly from those in Sectors 2 and 3; they report knowing significantly more about these matters today. In this instance, however, despite such “internal” differences across the various sectors of Jewish education, the educator respondents, whatever the sector in which they’re located, report significantly higher levels of Jewish knowledge than those who are not Jewish educators. It seems that despite a relatively low threshold of entry to employment within many Sector 2 and 3 venues (a phenomenon substantiated by data from the *Mapping the Market* study), those who work in these sectors are distinguished from those they serve (adult peers employed in other fields) in their greater Jewish knowledge, though not in their knowledge of Hebrew.

<sup>20</sup> Jewish knowledge and Hebrew knowledge are “factors,” analytical composed of multiple survey items that share a common variance. See Appendix C for details of the factors’ component elements.

## Exhibit 5: What Jewish Educators Know – Comparing Different Sectors of Jewish Education (Factor Analysis)<sup>19</sup>

Mean response to the question, “When you think about your personal level of [Jewish/Hebrew] knowledge, how true for you are the following statements? (“Not True at All” to “Very True”, 5-pt scale)



### A Capital Issue: Knowing What the Work of Jewish Educators Involves

A facet of possessing both relevant social and cultural capital is knowing what Jewish educators do, and how to gain entry to that work. This is not a phenomenon we tested with the survey; we didn’t anticipate it would be such a determinative issue. But in our interviews with those who have not entered the field, we discovered how limited a picture many people have of what working as a Jewish educator involves, especially if they are not directly connected to people who are full-time Jewish educators. A number of interviewees who did not become Jewish educators conveyed that they didn’t explore Jewish education as a career option because they didn’t desire to be a day school or supplementary school teacher or work as a congregational rabbi. They hadn’t imagined that other options might exist, as conveyed by the quotations below. In a later section, we will discuss the causes of such widespread misconceptions, and how they might be addressed in ways that might bring more people into the field.

*It wasn’t a thing to go into Jewish education in my community. My family is observant, but we are very much educated, secular, everyone has professional jobs, what not ... I can’t think of anyone in the community that’s solely into Jewish education. That might be different than “Oh I want to be a Hebrew teacher when I grow up.” The people who run my grandfather’s old synagogue, all the people running the synagogue, they’re not fulltime clergy—is that the word—people involved in the synagogue. ... I got the feeling that everyone had a real job on the side ... maybe that was why I never really thought of it as a thing.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

*I didn’t think about [becoming a Jewish educator]. I was studying international relations and business, that was my main focus. I cared a lot about the Jewish world, but Jewish education per se—being a rabbi or a teacher in a day school- no, that wasn’t what I was going for.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

21 Jewish knowledge and Hebrew knowledge are “factors,” analytical composed of multiple survey items that share a common variance. See Appendix C for details of the factors’ component elements.

# Inhibitors – Structures and Circumstances that Keep People Away

Once I left grad school, I had taught in Jewish day schools, however, the pay is really low. Like really low. And so, if my options are between making \$50,000 with benefits in a public school and possibly retirement and pension, versus making \$38,000 in the same area as a full-time teacher, where I was working longer hours and I'd have to pay for insurance, and there was no retirement...

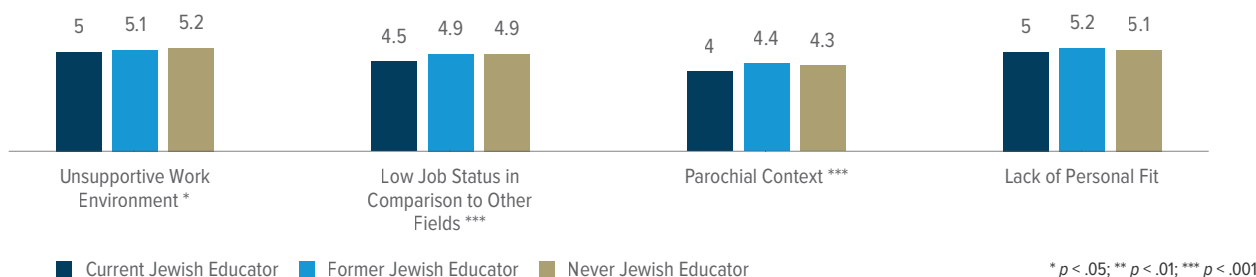
—Former Jewish Educator

A range of circumstances and pressures may discourage individuals from working in the field of Jewish education or from making a career in this field. Some of those circumstances are benign (a person might love Jewish learning but have a greater passion for another field of work); others are more constricting (related to economic pressures or the professional environment). People's work or career plans are shaped by an ongoing tension between inhibitors of these kinds and the commitments and aspirations set in motion by the stimuli and assets described above.

Our survey data (see Exhibit 6) show that those who previously worked as Jewish educators or who never did are significantly more likely than current Jewish educators to leave their fields of work if those fields possess characteristics associated with low job status and parochialism.<sup>22</sup> These populations are also somewhat more likely to leave unsupportive work environments, but they are no different from current Jewish educators when it comes to leaving a field of work because of a lack of personal fit. It is telling that the inhibitors that most strongly distinguish between the responses of those who are Jewish educators today (whatever the sector in which they're employed) and others are essentially built into the field of Jewish education; they cut across sectors and workplaces. The construct "low job status," for example, includes items such as poor financial compensation and poor benefits, and the construct "parochial context" is associated with serving a demographically limited segment of society. These inhibitors are *structural* rather than *circumstantial* and are likely to keep people from entering the field in the first place. Circumstantial factors—an unsupportive work environment or lack of personal fit—are artifacts of particular workplaces; they are more likely to lead individuals to switch their place of work if the option exists or to leave the field altogether once they've already begun employment. These inhibitors are not likely to prevent people from entering the field in the first place.

## Exhibit 6: Likelihood of Leaving Due to Inhibiting Work Features (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, "When you think about your current professional life and the factors that might drive you away from your current field, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 'I would consider leaving, or would possibly leave my field of work if I perceive that...'" ("Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree", 7-pt scale)



22 "Low job status" and "parochial context" like the other constructs here are "factors," analytical constructs composed of multiple survey items that share a common variance. See Appendix C for details of the factors' component elements.

Jewish educators who plan to stay in the field may well have faced the same headwinds that deflect others from this professional path, and yet they have persisted with this path. If, once they started work, the inhibitor they faced was *circumstantial*, perhaps they were fortunate that some other factor reduced its impact (as in the cases below). Supportive colleagues or the support of a larger network of peers seem to make a decisive difference in these situations (further evidence of the benefits of social capital). Faced by *structural* inhibitors, however, a different dynamic seems to be at work: Jewish educators who start work in and remain in the field exhibit a higher level of tolerance for discomfort, even resilience, that enables them to stay the course. Shortly, we will explore what the sources of such resilience might be, since these sources appear to enable people to embrace what is evidently an imperfect field.

*I really use the campus support person as a true supervisor. Without that one-on-one mentorship there'd be little incentive to continue. Pay and work-life balance are always a consideration. Part of the way I've offset that is it's meaningful work and I'm being challenged and growing in the role. So, when I have supervisors that aren't able to provide that structure or opportunities for development, you wonder why am I doing this personally?*

—Current Jewish Educator

*Luckily, I've had some really good mentors who have been able to get me off that ledge and give me perspective. It's really almost impossible to teach classroom management skills. But I'm better now. Mentors? Something the Jewish ed world does very well is they throw mentors at you. In the best way.*

—Current Jewish Educator

## Enabling Opportunities

As explained in the *Preparing for Entry* concept paper, many fields of work include an entry stage—a kind of portal and occasional purgatory—in which interested candidates have an opportunity to acquire on-the-job skills, demonstrate their preparedness or potential, and at the same time explore for themselves their suitability and readiness for work in the field. In medicine, once they complete medical school, trainee doctors are required to complete a residency as a stage in their transition from education to employment. In many countries, novice lawyers and accountants are required to be “articled” under the supervision of someone already in the profession. These are often highly competitive opportunities that also serve to filter out borderline-appropriate candidates.

Such experiences—Enabling Opportunities—also exist in the field of Jewish education and take various forms: as fellowship programs, internships, accessible first experiences of work, or university-based programs. All of these opportunities enable people to reach the threshold of career entry and then perhaps to see themselves, unambiguously, as Jewish educators. The most common such frameworks in which survey respondents reported having participated were graduate programs at Yeshiva University (YU), the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR); educator programs at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies; Hillel International’s campus professional fellowships; advanced training in the camp sector such as Camp Ramah’s Kerem framework; scaffolded induction programs such as the Union for Reform Judaism’s YP-101 and the Jewish New Teacher Project’s Induction Program; the Nachshon Project Fellowship for undergraduate students; and Jewish religious outreach (*kiruv*) immersive training programs.

Almost half (46%) of the survey respondents who are currently working as Jewish educators participated in an Enabling Opportunity of this kind. By contrast, only about 10% of those who have never worked as Jewish educators did so. This is not surprising. People don't typically sign up for such programs if they have no interest in pursuing the area of work to which they're connected. More noteworthy, fewer than a quarter (23%) of respondents who started work as Jewish educators and then left the field within five years participated in an Enabling Opportunity.

Does participating in an Enabling Opportunity increase the likelihood that someone will enter and stay in the field? It seems likely.<sup>23</sup> Of course, those who participate in such programs are often the most enthusiastic and determined to become Jewish educators, even prior to their enrollment. If they remain in the field, it may have less to do with what they gained from the program in which they participated than with the commitments they brought with them from the start. However, in terms of their backgrounds (the various stimuli we previously examined), those who have participated in such programs do not seem very different from those who did not. Those who participated in Enabling Opportunities reported the same financial, cultural and social capital as their peers who did not participate, at the time of entry. They were not necessarily groomed to have taken this path.

Today, graduates of these programs, when compared with the rest of the sample, do exhibit a greater love of Jewish learning, a more expansive sense of personal Jewish mission, and a greater desire to contribute to the lives of others. Survey data do not reveal how deeply these respondents were committed to such values before they started a program, but during interviews people certainly convey how these experiences helped clarify their values or how they deepened an already existing passion for Jewish education and Jewish learning, as in the following examples:

*[In this fellowship] they talk a lot about doing good ... I could be a breadwinner or the person passing out the bread. In the Jewish community sometimes it's both, but trying to find that balance. I realized for me that it's more important to be passing out the bread.*

—Current Jewish Educator

*Unlike the grad school I went where it was a one and done, Pardes is a place to go back to. There's always more to learn, always ways to improve your practice. ... Pardes is very clear with that pedagogy ... whereas a more traditional place, it's okay, this is how it is, maybe do PD once in a while, whereas Pardes as an institution recognizes that the whole of rabbinic Judaism is constantly changing, evolving as Jewish learners, as Jewish educators. I would 100% do Pardes again and plan to.*

—Current Jewish Educator

The primary value proposition offered by Enabling Opportunity programs is that they assist participants in gaining entry to specific areas of the field of Jewish education; they help their graduates or alumni not only survive but thrive professionally. This might be by providing scaffolded practicum experiences or on the job support—or by introducing critical skills, theories, and know how. We saw evidence above that, additionally, the programs fuel a commitment to do the work; they don't just help with learning how to do it. Finally, interviewees indicate that the programs provide one further benefit: they nurture support systems of peers and mentors who can be invaluable aides when the work gets hard. These people often play a decisive role in ameliorating the impact of constricting circumstantial inhibitors.

<sup>23</sup> Regression Analysis points in the same direction. Those who did not participate in an Enabling Opportunity are 63% more likely to leave the field within five years than those who did participate in such an experience.

*I have a lot of friends from college and from Masa who have gone into education. ... From Masa a lot of people became Hillel professionals. I feel like I have a lot of peer support, and people I can commiserate with and problem solve with. One of my good friends also worked at this school. I have this community there. That's really the thing that has helped me through this.*

—Current Jewish Educator

By providing professional competence and content knowledge, as well as commitment and connection, these programs seem to ease people’s entry to the field and cement their place within it in ways that many of those who do not have such experiences lack.

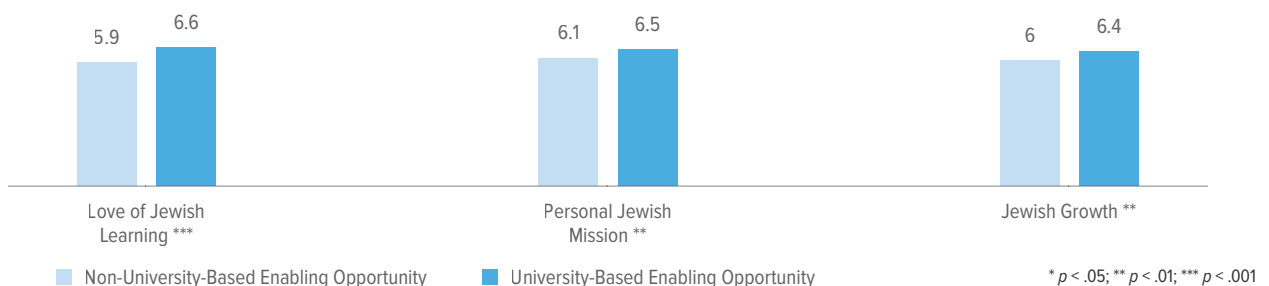
## Comparing Different Forms of Enabling Opportunities

There are two primary forms of Enabling Opportunity: those that are university based, whether pre-service or in-service, and those that operate outside universities as non-certifying fellowships or internship experiences. Among survey respondents currently working in the field of Jewish education who completed an Enabling Opportunity, half did so in a university-based program and half participated in a fellowship or internship program in a non-university framework. Among those who are no longer working as Jewish educators and do not intend to return to the field, just 13% of Enabling Opportunity alumni had participated in a university-based program; 87%, the vast majority of those who left the field, had participated in an Enabling Opportunity through an alternative framework.

It is hard to know, on this basis, whether university-based programs contribute to a greater commitment to remain in the field or whether individuals who already possess a commitment to stay are more likely to sign up for a university program often at great financial cost. As seen in Exhibit 7, there are statistically significant differences between the attitudinal orientations of alumni of university-based Enabling Opportunities and alumni of programs that are not university-based. Alumni of university-based programs express a greater sense of personal Jewish mission, a stronger passion for Jewish learning, and a greater concern to develop personally as Jews. They also report higher levels of Jewish knowledge (not shown here). We cannot determine, though, whether these commitments and characteristics have been ignited by their program experiences or whether such commitments brought them to these programs in the first place.

### Exhibit 7: Jewish Passions and Knowledge Among Enabling Opportunity Alumni (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, 7-pt scale)



## Bypassing the Funnel

Of course, it is possible to enter the field of Jewish education and to want to stay in it without participating in an Enabling Opportunity. That is the case for just over half of the survey respondents who currently work as Jewish educators and intend to remain in the field. As we have learned from the *Mapping the Market* strand of our work, some employers even prefer new recruits who have not been educated or trained in such frameworks. With a goal of disrupting how Jewish education is conducted, these organizations want their staff to learn their work and be socialized to their field on the job.

Furthermore, many people who were raised in thick Jewish environments, who engaged in intensive Jewish learning of their own, or who are interested in working in sectors that prefer less conventional pathways don't see a need to invest time and money in preparing for entry. If preparatory frameworks require tuition, the value proposition looks even less attractive. Why pay fees for graduate school, when the salary one can expect to receive will never help with getting out of debt?

*I never felt the need to participate in a formal training program. If my end goal was working in a Jewish day school, I probably would have wanted something more formal, but I was really interested in working in a synagogue or camp or Hillel program. So, because I was so immersed in informal Jewish education already, and had done Cornerstone, and HUC leadership trainings, I never felt like I needed it.*

—Current Jewish Educator

Finally, those individuals who come to Jewish education having worked, and even having pursued a career, in another field also don't seem to be disadvantaged by not participating in an Enabling Opportunity. In our sample, 38% of current Jewish educators who plan to stay in the field are “switchers” of this kind; and just 34% of these switchers have participated in an Enabling Opportunity, compared to 54% of non-switchers. Functionally, working in another field seems to serve the same role as experiencing an Enabling Opportunity, at least when it comes to helping people thrive in the workplace, a phenomenon made vivid by interview data. Switchers accumulate professional and life skills that prove valuable in settings for Jewish education. Having gained these skills on the job, they may be better prepared than those coming straight into Jewish education as a first field of work; certainly, they're better prepared than those who weren't groomed for this field in some semi-protected preparatory framework. This was repeatedly affirmed by switchers interviewed during the *On the Journey* phase of our work who had continued to work in the field for more than five years, as in the following example:

*Sometimes [in Jewish education], ... it's like the pace is, oh, we have endless time to prepare programs or to think and brainstorm ... and when I [came in from working in the business world] I started to implement more things that related to business culture into education, meaning, working more effectively on projects, leadership styles that are good to implement from the business world, entrepreneurship models that are sometimes missing. If you follow these startup companies and learn the process they follow from A to Z in taking an idea and making it a project then a product, I say the same process can be duplicated in Jewish education.*

—Current Jewish Educator

*Immediately following the report, see “Wandering into Judaism: The Switcher – Marta’s Story,” for an extended account of a switcher’s path into the field.*

# The Heart of the Matter

## Why People Become Jewish Educators

Our analysis so far helps explain *how* people come to be Jewish educators. It makes visible some of the circumstances and conditions that contribute to individuals choosing to enter this field and planning to remain within it: Jewish educators (especially those working in supplementary schools, day schools, and early childhood settings) more commonly had educator role models or positive influences within their families and their communities during their younger years than others did; they had access to deeper Jewish cultural capital and social capital; and if they participated in an Enabling Opportunity they were primed for success.

This account does not, however, get to the heart of *why* some people become Jewish educators and others do not, especially when their origins stories are so similar. As we will see, those who have become Jewish educators are most distinct from those who are not Jewish educators, or from those who left the field after a brief stay, in their passions and their values. To preview what follows: Jewish educators are moved by a more intense, general desire to contribute to others, and they are also animated by a sense of Jewish mission—of wanting to contribute to the Jewish community. They have a passion for Jewish learning that they want to share with others, helped by relatively high levels of Jewish and Hebrew knowledge. In short, they seem to be distinguished even more in their commitments and passions than in their points of origin.

## A Personal Jewish Mission

*Part of being a Jew is educating the Jewish future ... I have been given the gift of Jewish education and I should share that with others. So that's why it's a significant part of my personal identity. And because it's a significant part of my Jewish identity, I see it as part of my Jewish practice—being a Jewish teacher.*

—Current Jewish Educator

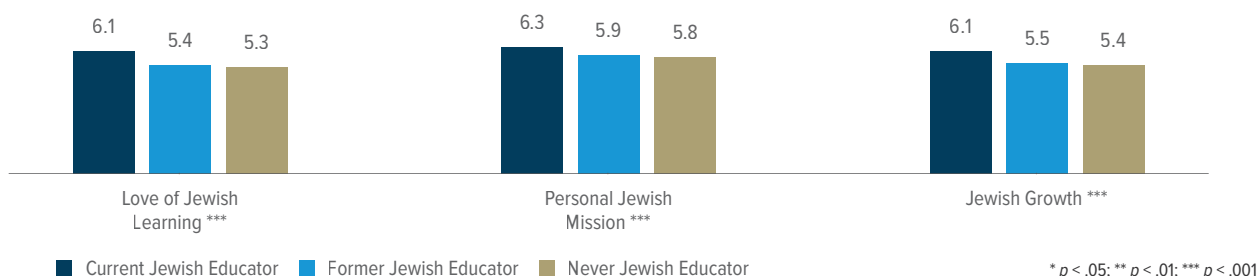
Those who work as Jewish educators today, and who plan to remain in the field, express a heightened enthusiasm for Jewish learning, for continuing to grow in Jewish terms, and they are interested in working in places that are compatible with these enthusiasms. But this is not the whole story. These dispositions can contribute to a rich inner Jewish life; and there are plenty of people who lead such lives without becoming Jewish educators even while they deeply appreciate Jewish education and what is involved in the work of Jewish education. For example, 56% of those in our sample who have never been Jewish educators characterize Jewish education as a noble profession. While this is much less than the 78% of those who are Jewish educators themselves, it indicates that a sizable population of non-educator “fellow travelers” have a strong appreciation for the work of Jewish education. (This is a potentially important finding to which we’ll return.)

What is telling is that, among Jewish educators, enthusiasm for Jewish life and culture exists alongside an additional passion to share the sources of this enthusiasm with others. The construct “Love of Jewish Learning” in Exhibit 5 combines, following factor analysis, responses to two question-items: “I really enjoy Jewish learning” and “I want to share Jewish learning with others.” This construct, derived inductively from the data, gives expression to a fusion of passions that are

both inwardly and outwardly directed. The outward-facing components of this commitment are best captured by the construct “Personal Jewish Mission” made up of items such as “I want to share the value of Jewish life with others” and “I want to contribute to the Jewish people.”<sup>24</sup> As seen in Exhibit 8, current Jewish educators are significantly more likely to agree with these mission-related concepts than either those who are no longer Jewish educators or those who never were.

### Exhibit 8: Jewish Passions – Comparing Jewish Educators and Others (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, 7-pt scale)



It’s not surprising that this sense of Jewish mission is often inflected with a strong sense of religious purpose, as in the following quote, but it is important to emphasize that this sense of mission is not the exclusive preserve of religious individuals. It can also be fueled by an intense appreciation of Jewish culture or a strong sense of Jewish fellowship.

*Because I chose this path in life and I chose to have a deeply fulfilling Jewish life, I feel it’s my responsibility to be a role model and to be an educator about Judaism, and I think it’s not even a profession, necessarily, it’s just who I am, and what God wants me to do with all the experiences he gave me.*

—Current Jewish Educator

## Universal Concerns

*I was bullied in school, and in these [Jewish places of work], I felt myself, and I felt like I had a community and had a place where I was connected. I really loved every moment of it and ... I wanted [other people] to feel connected and feel they had a place to learn and grow and become themselves.*

—Current Jewish Educator

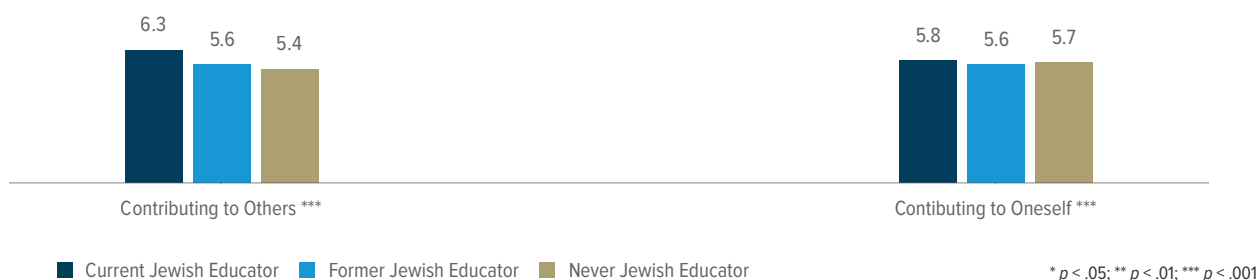
While the Jewish components in the identity of a Jewish educator loom large, as evidenced in the previous section, being an educator nevertheless carries its own distinct valence. Almost by definition, educators seek to contribute to the lives of others. For Jewish educators, this universal disposition is fused with particularistic concerns, whether in the form of the subject matter on which educators draw, the contexts in which they work, or the persons they seek to engage. The universal dimensions of the impulse to educate are hard to detect in interviews with Jewish educators when the topic of inquiry is Jewish education, even if the quote above could have originated in any context, general or Jewish. Jewish education constitutes a kind of local dialect in which education’s universal values are expressed.

24 See Appendix C for details of the factors’ component elements.

Survey data help parse out the universal from the particular by soliciting responses to deconstructed concepts, separating pieces that are normally fused together. Survey respondents were asked what motivates them in their professional lives. Their responses took shape within two constructs (factors): “Contributing to Others” and “Contributing to Oneself.”<sup>25</sup> While Jewish educators exceed others in seeing their work as “contributing to oneself,” as seen in Exhibit 9, they differ to a greater degree when it comes to their desire to “[contribute] to others.” Their professional identities are informed by a vein of altruism that is more prominent than in other fields of work.

### Exhibit 9: Motivations in One’s Professional Life – Comparing Jewish Educators with Others (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, “When you think about what motivates you in your current professional life, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ‘I am motivated by...’” (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, 7-pt scale)



How such values animate people’s motivations to engage in certain kinds of professional work are well captured in the following interview extracts. The first comes from a current educator who conveys how her primary focus is on the learner, on what’s “right for them [the learners],” even while she is concerned with transmitting particular Jewish content. By contrast, the second quote from an individual who is working in the field of medicine reveals how the challenging nature of this work contributes to its appeal, in terms of how it makes the interviewee stretch personally. The drive suggested by the first quotation is ultimately altruistic, contributing to others. The drive in the second quotation is hardly egotistic or selfish, but it is more inwardly focused; it is concerned with the interviewee’s own growth.

*My desire has always been to create and help learners develop a relationship with Judaism and Israel that’s right for them and I want to be the creator of those experiences rather than having another organization interpret them and I am just sharing the message.*

—Current Jewish Educator

*The feel as a whole in medicine is a respectable one, it involves using your brain, it’s interesting, it’s problem solving, it’s creative thinking, thinking out of box, challenges. That’s what it is, a challenge. I like to torture myself with challenges.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

To sum up: those who enter the field of Jewish education are certainly interested in sustaining their own growth, and significantly more so than others, as Exhibit 9 shows, but that is only part of what drives them. No less important, and possibly more important, is the urge to contribute to the growth of others. This seems to be the central impulse that attracts people to this field, and the intensity with which it is felt distinguishes those who have become and intend to remain Jewish educators from others who are not.

25 “Contributing to others” combines the items: “Positively shaping future generations,” “Being able to teach important subjects to others,” “Inspiring others,” “Impacting people’s life paths,” and “Expressing my commitment to educating others.” “Contributing to oneself” combines the items: “Being able to build strong interpersonal connections in my work,” “Working in a place in which I have much in common with many of the staff members,” “The challenge of being creative every day,” and “Making a living.”

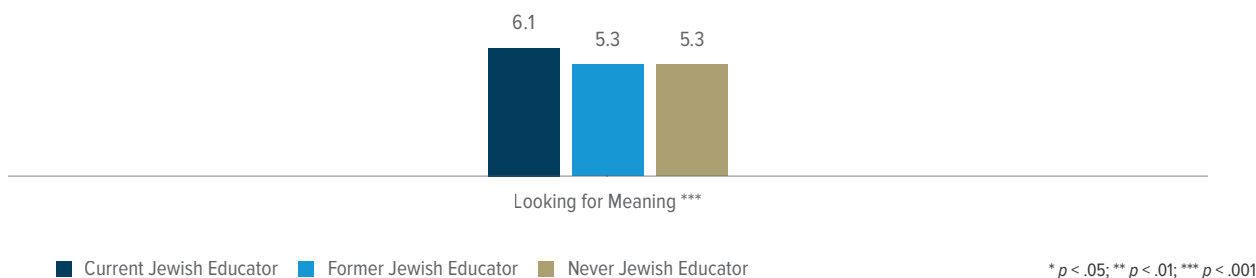
## When a Career Becomes a Calling

These two aspirations—the desire to grow and to enable growth in others—merge in the search for work that gives the fullest expression to one’s passions. This is work where one’s role merges with one’s identity, to adapt a concept of education scholar Deborah Britzman.<sup>26</sup> This is when a career becomes a calling.<sup>27</sup>

Survey data convey how this concept is important for all survey respondents when they contemplate any kind of work they do. And yet, these data also underline its significance for Jewish educators. Almost all the Jewish educators in our sample strongly affirmed that “my work is a very important part of my identity,” “I do the work that I do because it is personally fulfilling/meaningful,” and that it isn’t “just something I do to pay the bills.” (These items come together in the construct “looking for meaning;” see Exhibit 10.)

### Exhibit 10: Importance of Finding Meaning in One’s Work – Jewish Educators Compared with Others (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, “Thinking about your current stage of your professional life, to what extent do you agree/disagree with...” (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, 7-pt scale)



Interviewees provide a strong sense of what it looks like when one’s work so strongly expresses one’s sense of self, when role and identity are merged.

*I think this is an expression of my life. The fact that I’m a female Torah teacher has everything to do with my feminism and my passion for Talmud study. It’s the kind of thing that in many professions it’s important to have a clear divide between home and work life, but because I work in Jewish community, there’s a very thin line, if any at all, between professional and personal life. There’s a presumption that you give your whole self.*

—Current Jewish Educator

*I would say definitely it reflects my personality. I always say that the work I’m doing is a calling. And the work I’m doing is really interconnected to my life and the things I love. I still celebrate Shabbat every week even though I work at a synagogue five days a week. Interconnected as a part of me. It’s a way to earn a living, but it’s really a calling ... I have friends who just do it to earn a living, and for me that’s definitely not the case.*

—Current Jewish Educator

Obviously, there are other fields of work where people’s identities are fully merged with their work, as in the quote below. It’s striking, however, to hear this interviewee describe that merger as unhealthy. By contrast, there are many who would argue that in Jewish education, deep personal investment of this kind is a desideratum and not something problematic.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Britzman, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> We intentionally express the process in these terms, and the not more commonplace “when a calling becomes a career,” because of the numerous instances in which interviewees described how it was only once they started work as a Jewish educator and committed to this work that they found how much it actually meant to them.

<sup>28</sup> This tension between career and calling is addressed in the brief “The Journeys of Jewish Educators.”

*That's my biggest issue in my career is how much I associate my personal identity with my role. It's the most unhealthy thing a salesperson can do, and it's bad. I need to separate from the roles I'm in, I know this, I studied it, and I still do it. When I fail I FAIL. And it takes a big step back to realize, I failed in this situation, I'm not some complete failure as a person. SO putting my id in my career is the worst thing I can do, but I do it every day.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

## Idealism is not a Synonym for Naivety

All told, these survey data capture the degree to which those who work as Jewish educators and who plan to remain in this field are motivated by a fusion of passions and commitments that drive them forward. We hypothesize that this fusion feeds their resilience in the face of the structural inhibitors that deflect others who are less motivated.

Certainly, individuals who choose the path of Jewish education are not naïve about the existence of these inhibitors, the challenging workplace conditions in which many of them might work.

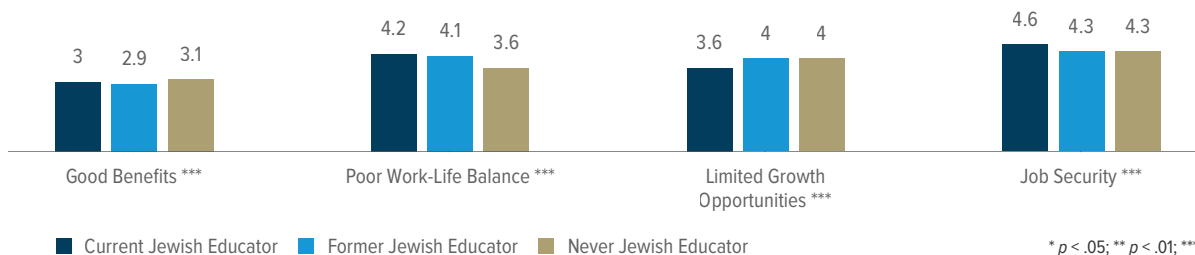
*I think in general, it's a really meaningful field, but one that is really demanding, in terms of time, energy, personal commitment. You do it because you love it. It's something that's really hard to fake.*

—Current Jewish Educator

In fact, Jewish educators seem more fully aware of these challenges than those who have never worked in the field. This is confirmed by the data in Exhibit 11. Fewer Jewish educators agree that this is a field with “Good Benefits,” and more agree that the work involves “Poor Work–Life Balance.”<sup>29</sup> At the same time, more of them dispute that the field offers “Limited Professional Growth Opportunities.” It seems that, drawing on their experience from within the field, they see some aspects of the field in a more positive light than do others, and some aspects as more negative. This is consistent across the sectors of Jewish education.

### Exhibit 11: Perceptions of Workplace Conditions in Jewish Education (Factor Analysis)

Mean response to the question stem, “Thinking about your current perspectives on work in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, 7-pt scale)



There are quite a few people who start work in the field, and once they learn what it involves, decide that it is not something they want to stick with (as in the first quote below). And yet, there are also those who start work in a kind of exploratory or tentative fashion and find that the conditions are better than they expected, as seen in the second quote below. Either way, it is hard

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C for details of the factors' component elements.

to imagine that those who see their future in this field don't have a realistic picture both of what it will demand of them and what the rewards can be. They may be idealistic, but they are not gullible.

*Work-life balance was a big one. I'm single now, but I want a family, and I have friends and being able to have good time off is important, so summers off are great. And it's just also really nice to not feel like my job is my whole life.*

—Former Jewish Educator

*I was a little bit surprised; I think. Growing up, I went to a Chabad Hebrew school for the 10 minutes I went to a Hebrew school. It was very classroom specific, wasn't much in the hallways, things to do, ways to fill the time during breaks. But this school (the one I worked in) is so well resourced and had a lot of support and structure and PD opportunities that I wasn't expecting for myself. This was just my part-time job—it was the complete opposite of what I was expecting. I went in not thinking about what it was like as a career and then changed my mind and seeing it as a very serious career afterward.*

—Current Jewish Educator

# Dismissing Dichotomy

## A Fresh View of Entry and Non-Entry to the Field of Jewish Education

In pointing to the idealistic impulses that draw some to the field, and to the inhibitors that keep or drive others away, we might seem to be affirming the dichotomy with which we started: the notion that choosing to become a Jewish educator is a case of mind over matter, of idealism overcoming inhibiting circumstances. Our data suggest this dichotomous narrative is too simplistic, especially those data derived from individuals who considered entering the field and never did or who started out as Jewish educators and then left the field within five years.

### Four Types of Opportunity

We call attention to four “types” of entry and non-entry revealed by the data. These types can be conceived as existing along a continuum toward the threshold of committing to the field over the long term. Each type suggests a distinct policy response. Immediately following this report, we include portraits (narrative accounts), each from a different interviewee, that help convey the texture and variety of these four types. At the same time, we resist assigning members of the respondent sample to one of these types or another. These types should be considered as making up a compelling heuristic that has emerged from the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data (from the survey and the interviews). To properly quantify the prevalence of these types, we would need to develop an entirely new survey.

### Fellow Travelers

There are thousands of people who have both enjoyed and appreciated the experience of working in some setting for Jewish education before their professional plans solidified in different directions. Perhaps they worked at camp over many summers, staffed trips to Israel, served as part-time educators in supplementary schools, or spent the first couple of years after graduation working for a youth organization. These were formative experiences which they deeply appreciate, and to which many attribute their success in life, but when the time came to move on—after college or when it is time to settle down—they feel they would be more successful in other fields or just can’t see themselves working indefinitely as Jewish educators. Perhaps some would have gone further with exploring the field if it offered better pay and better workplace conditions, but most did not and do not intend to remain in the field. Survey data indicate that their passion for the field does not run as deep as it does for those who do intend to remain.

Here is a sample of how some of these people, none of whom are Jewish educators today, reflect on their experiences:

*I liked being an informal educator, I was a camp counselor. Do you know what EIE is, the high school in Israel? That was my dream job, being a counselor there. I was getting out of the IDF, did Jewish education, I always wanted to be a counselor. That was the best, being a counselor at EIE. ... So, I got that, one of my dreams came true, did it for a semester, it was fantastic,*

would go back and do it again. Then I knew I was starting college, and knew the career wouldn't be Jewish education, the decision there was because I needed to prioritize. What do I enjoy more, a Jewish educator, or an engineer, math guy, and I knew I enjoyed that just a little more. I also knew I was an okay Jewish educator, but I knew I was a much better engineer, and I really enjoy being the best at things. That's pretty important to me, and I knew if I wanted to be the best I shouldn't go into Jewish education because I'm okay, but I'm not amazing. I enjoyed it but I wasn't amazing at it or anything.

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

Yes, of course those experiences had an impact, the skills I gained are amazing; amazing interpersonal skills, dealing with difficult personalities, dealing with different types of Jews, the kid from Chicago with no Jewish friends, and the spoiled brat from Atlanta with tons of money and just there to party. There are so many levels of intentions, levels of background, and through my experience I was able to understand, observe, and change my behavior and responses based on different types of personalities. The skills I gained there are absolutely transferable to what I do now. And I cherish the experiences I had. Especially leading Birthright, the range of backgrounds, expectations, you'll never get that anywhere else. 40 people from all over the country, certainly a growing experience of learning how to deal with people. It did have an impact.

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

The education route is tough. I think everyone dreams of it a little bit. After my year in Israel, I thought "do I stay in Israel and do this?" My dad said you need to come home, at least for college. Then you get all the pressures of "you need to make money" and blah blah blah. I staffed three Birthright trips—that was interesting, with people most of whom weren't connected. The educational aspect was always interesting but didn't seem like it made any sense. Maybe you'd feel good at night, but I think there would be a lot of other struggles that came with it. I never actively pursued it. I don't want to say I'm too old, but there are certain responsibilities that I have now that would make that a little tough.

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

These are neither bitter stories nor stories of disappointment. They are accounts of people who went in a different direction and still feel great admiration for the work of Jewish education. These stories may yet represent a missed opportunity; not because these people could have become Jewish educators, but because they could still become advocates for Jewish education. Individuals who so deeply understand what young people get from Jewish education and what the work involves should be mobilized as allies and supporters. Some might yet serve as volunteer educators in their communities; others could become board members and financial supporters of Jewish educators. The Jewish community has not paid sufficient attention to these fellow travelers. Our data provide compelling evidence for why it is time to do so.

## Looking for a Map

Our interviews revealed a further type who today resembles a potential "fellow traveler," but who at some point might have gone further toward entering the field. We discussed such cases earlier when exploring the consequences of lacking relevant social or cultural capital; we referred to people who presumed they wouldn't fit in the field or who expressed interest in the possibility of work as a Jewish educator but couldn't find their way in. Interviewees of the first kind presumed

that work as a Jewish educator necessarily involves teaching in a day school or supplementary school or serving as a congregational rabbi. They didn't imagine that Jewish educators performed other roles. They concluded they'd be grossly unqualified for such roles, or the roles themselves didn't sufficiently appeal to them, as in the following instance:

*Maybe also not having a degree in it—in Jewish education specifically. Because you can work in the Jewish community in many different ways. But I guess if you're talking about Jewish education—I went to a Jewish high school and elementary school, I would definitely need a lot more training and knowledge to be a formal Jewish educator.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

Slightly different from this type—but characterized by a similar lack of insider knowledge—were those who did start to explore options in Jewish education but didn't have the know-how to explore additional options once these first efforts did not bear fruit.

*I applied to a couple jobs at day schools back in the day, but ... [sighs], I applied to a couple in my town but didn't get a position. ... And my learning is very much hidden. I don't wear a yarmulke ... I didn't go to a Jewish day school. One reason I'm so into Judaism, is that all my friends that went to day school or Hebrew school, they are agnostic, Judaism didn't mean anything to them because Jewish education is so shallow in the US. ... So, I didn't go to these schools, I don't have connections there.*

—Never Became a Jewish Educator

It would be easy to write off these accounts as cases of people “who didn't want it enough;” if these people were really determined to start work in the field, they surely would have found a way. And yet, there is also evidence here of the need to break free from a self-perpetuating cycle. In one of the most influential studies of what it means to be an educator, Dan Lortie discussed how teacher education is challenged by what he called an “apprenticeship of observation”: all prospective teachers have spent thousands of hours observing teaching from the other side of the teacher's desk, and they presume to know what it involves.<sup>30</sup> The types we describe here are impacted by the same problem: their perceptions of what a career in Jewish education might look like are distorted by a long apprenticeship of observation; they're limited to whatever models of Jewish education they personally experienced themselves. To break out of this cycle, the field needs to tell more stories about what alternative opportunities in this field look like. Prospective candidates need opportunities to learn what's possible and how to find their way to those possibilities.

## Turning Around on the Highway

Almost 40% of our analytical sample—800 survey respondents—did start to work as Jewish educators before deciding, during their first five years on the job, that they'd had enough. These people indicated through their survey responses that they do not intend to return. Given that the survey was fielded to populations, all of whom had reasonable potential of becoming Jewish educators at some point, it is shocking to note that there were 50% more of these people in our sample than current Jewish educators who plan to stay.

No doubt, some of these folks would *not* have made successful careers in the field. It is likely a good thing for them and their charges that they didn't stay. Every field sees a healthy turnover of new entries who learn by doing that they're not cut out for something they thought might

<sup>30</sup> Lortie, 1975.

suit them. This seems to be the case in the following instance for a participant in the Masa Israel Teaching Fellows program, a teach-abroad framework in Israel from which those who take part often return to their home countries to pursue a career in Jewish or general education:

*It was really tough teaching in Be'er Sheva in Israel, especially in low-income areas, where there's not a lot of discipline. And that's really hard going into especially when you've never taught formally before except here and there part time like Hebrew school or Sunday school. And there was no structure, and I'm very structure oriented ... and I was like there's no way I can do this for the rest of my life ... for me that was enough. That one year was great, and I loved it and I formed great relationships, but I couldn't see myself doing that in the long term, I would burn out very quickly.*

—Former Jewish Educator

Surely, though, with the right support, some of these people would have found their way to make a positive contribution. This, we believe, is where the earlier distinction between structural and circumstantial inhibitors can be useful. Structural inhibitors are built into the fabric of the field; they will likely be impossible to shift and may follow educators from workplace to workplace. At best, they can be tolerated or resisted by those with a strong sense of personal mission. Circumstantial inhibitors derive from the specific situation in a particular workplace. They need not deter or deflect, especially when, as we have seen, appropriate supports are available—when there is someone close by who “can talk you off the ledge,” as one interviewee put it. This helps explain the difference between the following two accounts. Interviewees faced distinct challenges (in the first instance an experience of racism in the workplace; in the second, an experience of other kinds of alienating values); one received support to overcome this experience, while the other did not and chose to leave the field.

*I was so far in at that point, had committed fully and had all these other amazing ties to my cohort. All the people pulled me aside after and said, I can't believe that just happened to you. But it was because of my cohort, the other educators, and because of my students, I was in my second year of teaching at the religious school and had a great experience with the principal and director and the director of the youth program there, who is still one of my closest friends, and I felt really strong ties from that, so I didn't let that one experience sour me, and people still see me as plenty serious. There was a little bit of the “F\*\*\* you, can't believe you labeled me, I'm going to show you and be extra successful.”*

—Current Jewish Educator

*Sometimes the Jewish working environment can get toxic, in my opinion. I'm trying to find the right word for it. It was very one sided. For example, when I was the program director at [my organization], the executive director at the time used the term “you need to spoon feed” these kids, you need to baby them, and we didn't agree on that. ... I always felt that ... my opinions weren't necessarily heard. Yes, they were somewhat eccentric, and some people heard them, I'm not going to say no one did, some people liked them. But they got shut down a lot of times.*

—Former Jewish Educator

How to ensure in a systematic manner that these circumstantial inhibitors are not corrosive? We argued above that participating in Enabling Opportunities makes a difference, and we'll say more about that below. For the moment, we underline that Enabling Opportunities help discourage early

career educators from “turning around on the highway” by cultivating powerful intellectual and emotional assets that help them resist such challenges. Similarly, when people switch into Jewish education from other fields of work, they frequently seem to come already supplied with such resilience building assets. Once people start the work, the most effective way to cultivate these assets is through the medium of induction. Induction has become increasingly normative in the day school sector. What would it take to extend this norm to other sectors of Jewish education? And in institutions where there are not enough other (or good enough) educators in-house to provide induction, how might it be possible to share responsibilities for induction across institutions? A system of this kind would help construct a safety net that would likely keep many promising educators in the field.

The individuals who turned back on the threshold of a career in Jewish education share some of the most dispiriting stories in our sample: stories where it easy to imagine ready solutions to a particular challenge someone faced. Especially sobering is that among the total sample of individuals who had reasonable potential of becoming Jewish educators, the group who turned back are the largest, single subgroup. The size and solvability of this problem calls for attention.

No doubt, as noted a few times above, there are some sectors where most of those who come into the field of Jewish education do not stay for longer than a few years. This is especially the case in youth-serving organizations and summer camp venues. In these venues, turnover of this kind is considered healthy; it helps ensure that educators are close enough in age to serve as near peers for their charges. To clarify, these are not the “types” we are examining here; those youth-serving educators are more likely to be “fellow travelers.” The types who turn around on the highway seriously weighed staying longer in the field and were inhibited from doing so. We’re proposing that there are ways to reduce the incidence of such phenomena.

## Equipped for the Journey

The contrast between those who kept going “on the journey” and those who turned back couldn’t be more striking. Sometimes, staying with this work simply comes down to good fortune. One can be like the current educator who admitted “I don’t know if I’ve ever had negative experiences, which I guess is one of the reasons why I’m able to persevere on this path.” Often, it is due to the intensity of the passion educators bring to the work, a passion that won’t let the most toxic environments hold them back. This is the practical consequence of coming into the field with the kind of drive we earlier discussed: a mission to positively shape the lives of others that lies deep within an individual’s identity. Consistently, survey data show that former Jewish educators possess this drive even less than those who never were Jewish educators.

As we earlier discussed, for a great many educators, the capacity to keep going does not however seem only to come down to luck or personal commitment. It can also be attributed to preparation—to participating in an experience that provides a structured foretaste of what lies ahead, builds the knowledge and skills with which to be effective, and nurtures networks of support that can make a decisive difference when times are hard. These, we believe, are the gifts bestowed by the best Enabling Opportunities. They provide educators with both the emotional provisions and intellectual equipment to make it through the challenging first years on the job. As we have shown throughout this account, quoting the words of alumni of such programs, the resources created by Enabling Opportunities can be deep and diverse: they nurture social networks of fellows educators and mentors who can be called on during times of challenge; they create opportunities

to develop a sophisticated understanding of the content of Jewish education and the contexts in which it occurs; they provide opportunities in which to develop a repertoire of practices while surrounded by protective scaffolding; and they fuel passion for working in this field that enables people to move forward on this journey.

It is most unfortunate that just under a third of our sample who started work as Jewish educators (whether they stayed or left) experienced an Enabling Opportunity. All the evidence suggests that if these opportunities were more readily available, better supported financially, and better advertised, it would make a substantial difference to the numbers of appropriately qualified individuals who enter the field of Jewish education and who stay for more than just a few years.

# Implications for the Field

The field of Jewish education will only ever attract a minority of suitable individuals. For all the existential benefits this field promises, it is exceptionally demanding work.

And yet, there are many more people who could have—even should have—become Jewish educators than actually did. These data suggest that if they did not do so, it wasn't simply because of a forced choice between material benefits and spiritual benefits. This study puts an end to this misleading dichotomous narrative. Other circumstantial factors are at work in explaining the career and life choices people make. These factors can be addressed constructively for the wellbeing of the field especially when viewed through the prism of the four types surfaced by the analysis:

1. **Fellow Travelers:** The many individuals who were “at positive risk” of entering the field of Jewish education constitute a missed opportunity but should not be seen as failures. Many “fellow travelers” view with great affection their time as volunteer, part-time, or short-term Jewish educators. They should be mobilized in support of Jewish education, a profession they hold in high regard. They can help change perceptions of this field and ultimately contribute to an improvement in its conditions by performing the roles of advocates, volunteer leaders, and philanthropic supporters.
2. **Looking for a Map:** Prospective Jewish educators are often blinkered by their own early experiences of Jewish education, their own “extended apprenticeship of observation.” They cannot imagine the wide variety of opportunities for work in various sectors of this field which they never experienced themselves. Because such people don't readily identify themselves by applying for positions in the field, a more general campaign—perhaps stimulated by CASJE's study of educator trajectories—is needed to communicate the great variety of opportunities and roles in the field to thereby challenge these preconceptions.
3. **Turning Around on the Highway:** The structured induction of new staff has become widespread, if not normative, in day schools. Our data confirm how such practices enhance the capacity of new entrants to the field to overcome the challenges they'll inevitably face. If these practices were extended to other venues of Jewish education, it would help overcome circumstantial inhibitors (challenges associated with specific places of work) and would also fuel the passion to help resist structural inhibitors (challenges associated with the field as a whole). This is not a new argument. This study, however, makes vivid how certain interventions can help overcome circumstantial inhibitors.
4. **Equipped for the Journey:** The literature review and now the empirical data generated by this study underline something that has long been known: pre-service preparation and scaffolded initiation into the field build the knowledge and skills with which to be effective and nurture networks of support that can make a decisive difference in difficult circumstances. The study provides suggestive evidence that these experiences—what we characterize as Enabling Opportunities—are strongly associated with surviving and thriving in the field, and it reveals that only a minority of Jewish educators actually participate in such experiences. More readily accessible Enabling Opportunities would provide greater numbers of Jewish educators with the emotional provisions and intellectual equipment to sustain them on the journey of Jewish education.

The history of Jewish education in North America is littered with frustrated attempts to significantly increase the numbers of appropriately qualified individuals entering this field. We risk hubris to presume that by taking the steps proposed here such a long-standing challenge might now be addressed. Nevertheless, drawing on the insights gleaned from an unprecedented research project, perhaps it is possible to avoid some of the disappointments of the past and make progress in this important work.

# Portraits of Entry

## The Fellow Traveler – Howie’s Story

Howie, an American-born young adult, who lived in Israel for a few years, currently works as an engineer at Proctor & Gamble and has had a strong interest in mechanics since he was a child: *“I always enjoyed taking apart old stereos and appliances, and didn’t know how to get them back together, but I took a lot apart, and knew I’d end up doing something where I figured out how things work.”* Following service in the IDF, Howie considered going into Jewish education or the rabbinate/cantorate and worked as an informal educator at NFTY-EIE high school in Israel (now URJ Heller High) for a semester. *“That was my dream job, being a counselor [at EIE].”*

Upon his return to the US, he set out to pick a career path and considered what he enjoyed more: Jewish education or engineering. Howie concluded that he was a “math guy” and knew he enjoyed it just a little more. He also weighed his talents: *“I knew I was an okay Jewish educator, but I knew I was a much better engineer, and I really enjoy being the best at things.”* Furthermore, he wanted to be in a professional setting right away and knew that the training to become a Jewish educator was long—and the salaries often rather low. Taking all these factors into account, Howie knew he wouldn’t make his career Jewish education.

His time as a Jewish educator helped him understand, though, that he is passionate about working with people, which led him to find exactly the right field of engineering for him. *“I knew exactly what kind of engineering I wanted to do, and where I work now is outside my degree because it works more with working with others and coaching others, and I got that from Jewish education.”*

Howie is satisfied and “personally invested” in his job, and although he did not choose to work primarily as a Jewish educator, he is still very active in Jewish life and his local Jewish community. He has a love for Jewish education and wants to give to his community as much as he can. He still plays music and leads services, including as a song leader at two different synagogues. *“Being a song leader was a passion and a dream, so I knew I’d need to be a song leader, so at 15 I added guitar to my instrument list, I started singing.”* Howie currently lives in a small Jewish community and often sings in the choir at a small local synagogue—though he would still jump at the chance to go back to Israel with EIE: *“If I got a call from EIE today and I could get a sabbatical, I’d be on a plane.”*

Despite not working in a Jewish setting, Howie is a positive Jewish figure, and as he puts it, he is able to *“demonstrate and teach others the Jewish values”* and to show other Jewish people *“that they don’t have to be limited because they’re Jewish.”*

## Looking For (and Finding) a Map – Jamie’s Story

Jamie currently serves as the Director of Engagement at Hillel at a private university in the suburbs. She began this job after serving for two years as a rabbinic administrative assistant after college to see if she was interested in becoming a rabbi. Although she majored in Women’s Studies and Spanish and had imagined doing something related, she was more drawn to Jewish education. *“I thought of going to social work school, but that was because I was scared to admit I wanted to be a Jewish professional.”*

Jamie’s Jewish life was transformed in college. She came from a non-religious family and had uninviting religious school educational experiences that left her unengaged. All this changed in college, when she was exposed to Hillel and a rabbi unlike those she had known previously. *“I would go so far as to say that two decades of horrific Jewish education propelled me so far into wanting to be a Jewish educator. In college, it wasn’t just my rabbi being awesome, it was that I realized Judaism can be awesome. ... I both wanted to learn more from people like my rabbi in college and also enact that kind of educational path for others. Simultaneously.”* Jamie’s own Jewish transformation both sharpened her desire for further learning for herself and honed her commitment to helping others access the kind of positive Jewish experiences she began having as a young adult. For these reasons, Jamie sought a position as a rabbi’s assistant after graduation to see if becoming a rabbi might be the right path for her, despite a widespread lack of support among others in her life. *“My mom thought I was going to cover my hair and move to Jerusalem immediately. Like, literally. ... I also got a lot from my women’s studies professors. I was a star ... and they weren’t stoked that I was going to work in the Jewish community.”*

Working as a rabbi’s assistant, it turns out, did not whet Jamie’s appetite for rabbinical school. *“I’ve heard rabbis who are sometimes like, ‘you don’t want to do this ... don’t go to rabbinical school.’ ... Being an assistant to a rabbi almost discouraged me—she had no balance in life, I managed her schedule and she had absolutely no time for her family.”* But the position did radically open her mind to the full panoply of possibilities within Jewish professional life, which helped her understand that her desire to become a rabbi was really the desire to be a Jewish professional. *“As her assistant, I was able to access so many people from so many organizations—more so than any other position in the organization. I saw people doing cool things all over. ... When I admitted to myself that ... I have no interest in being a rabbi. ... That’s when I thought I could access Jewish space and be an educator ... [but] it felt scary, and not normative for my community. ... I admitted to myself that I love this work and want to stay in it.”*

While Jamie is loosely considering further formal education in this direction, realizing she doesn’t have to be a rabbi to be involved in Jewish education was a breakthrough. For her, working in Jewish organizations is a great way for her to engage in her own learning about aspects of Jewish life she didn’t internalize in her childhood. *“I love the knowledge and the ebb and flow of the Jewish calendar, but I don’t want to do it in that way. I love operating on a Jewish schedule, Jewish values—my organization is me, I’m my organization.”* Although Jamie acknowledges some of the familiar pitfalls of the field and cannot say for sure whether she plans to stay indefinitely, like many other passionate Jewish educators, she is deeply and personally tied to the mission of her work. *“Every day I wake up and do Jewish work and teach Jewish classes and it feels in line with my values. ... If I’m being honest with myself, I’m here for a reason, I love it, it feels so important to reach students who like me came to college with this preconceived notion that Judaism was working against them and work with them to soften that and feel ownership and love when it comes to Judaism and that I don’t think I’m going to find anywhere else.”*

## Turning Around on the Highway – Abby's Story

As a young adult, Abby was very involved in the Jewish community and participated in many Jewish leadership activities. She was a madricha on Taglit, participated in the Dorot Fellowship where she sometimes led seminars about Israel, and during her freshman year of college served as “a Jewish life liaison.” Additionally, she did some community education or outreach during her time working at those jobs.

Abby considered pursuing a career in Jewish education, mainly due to her familiarity with the Jewish community and the broad network she built up following participation in several programs. *“I knew the people in that world, there was more comfort level, knowing people in those organizations was comfortable.”* Working in the Jewish world was something she considered for a while, but in retrospect she realized she didn't really want to be working as a Jewish professional. Her interest at that time was more a reflection of where her *“network was at that point.”*

When she was applying to her current job outside of Jewish education, she was a finalist for another job in a Jewish organization that works with Jewish young adults. In hindsight, the job in the Jewish organization sounded interesting, but it would not have been as satisfying as what she's doing now, which she finds stimulating and intellectually fulfilling. *“[My work] opens more doors and more connections ... there's a level of prestige that you don't necessarily get [in] other places.”* Additionally, Abby sees the career trajectory in the Jewish world as extremely limited: *“I feel like I could stay here for 30 years, and that job [with a Jewish organization] I could maybe do for a year or two. ... [Had I] continued on that path, it would have been a really insular network ... the experience is very niche.”*

Ultimately, Abby chose a job outside the Jewish community. She currently works primarily as an immigration policy analyst at the Library of Congress and on the side as an adjunct sociology professor. She is very satisfied with her choice and feels that she “really lucked out.” She finds that her current job is perfect for her, as it's “applied but also academic,” and she feels proud of the work she does.

## Equipped for the Journey – Rebecca’s Story

Rebecca currently works as Director of Youth Programming and Engagement at a large, urban synagogue where she creates the content for the full teen program and teaches a seventh-grade class. She previously spent several years in a national organization dedicated to Jewish engagement and programming. Although she enjoyed that role, she realized she wanted a more direct educational role that made fuller use of her MA in Jewish Education. *“I found I was leaving my seventh grade [religious school] class, and that was the thing filling me up and sustaining me through the rest of my week.”*

Rebecca grew up in a Conservative household and had multiple experiences that influenced her in the direction of Jewish education. *“I was ... fortunate to have an amazing, amazing religious school experience. ... I grew up in a town without a lot of Jewish people and liked the idea of being connected to something bigger outside my town. So I worked with this cantor and became the first B’nai Mitzvah tutor outside the clergy department.”* While early morning music classes in college diverted her from pursuing a cantorial program, her desire to *“help learners develop a relationship with Judaism and Israel that’s right for them,”* remained. Rebecca also draws inspiration from a negative incident from high school. *“I had a swastika painted on my locker, and the school wanted me to name the student. ... Instead, I worked with one of my teachers to create a lesson to talk about religious tolerance and unity ... so it was a moment when I chose education over another option, ... that has been a driving force for me.”*

Rebecca began her master’s work sometime after completing a fellowship with Masa Career Israel working with the education team at a museum in Tel Aviv. *“When I started the MA I thought I wanted to work as a Jewish museum educator but found that [the] path was very, very limiting, that there were only about three positions in that.”* Even so, Rebecca has found the work she’s done since graduating very fulfilling and sees it as integral to her identity. *“I’ve always wanted to make a difference in the Jewish world and always saw education as the way to do it, and now that I work with a different population the strategy has changed but not my end goal of doing it. My work is entirely tied to my values. That’s why I take everything so personally, in terms of a project not going well, or if some interaction doesn’t go perfectly.”*

Rebecca expresses uncertainty about staying in this particular area of work permanently. Her uncertainty is connected to multiple things, including the way COVID-19 has changed her role, but especially the combination of lackluster compensation and utter lack of work–life balance. *“I feel privileged that I was encouraged first to pursue a career in alignment with my values, and think salary second, but as I’ve grown and had separation from my parents, it’s [become a concern]. I’m also putting in an overwhelming amount of effort, and not only effort on the work front, but the emotional effort of helping families through transitional moments. Parents are looking to me for answers I don’t have, how are teens getting through social isolation, losing their senior year. So there’s not only the salary consideration but the emotional toll. ... I’ve been thanked for my work and been told ‘thank you in the name of the future of the Jewish people,’ but it’s a heavy responsibility.”*

While Rebecca is unsure what her life will look like in 10 years, she is not currently looking to leave the field and knows she will always be involved in Jewish education in some capacity. *“But for the rest of my life, I intend to be a Jewish educator in some way for as long as I’m a working professional, but I also find my family doesn’t practice Judaism so much anymore, so I fall into the Jewish educator role for my family, too, people in my life see it as my role.”*

## Wandering into Judaism: The Switcher – Marta’s Story

Marta is a wanderer, someone who is perpetually exploring different fields over the course of her career. Her path to becoming a Jewish educator started a number of years into her working life after working as an astronomer, then pursuing a master’s degree in divinity school and working as a hospital chaplain in a pediatric ward for three years. Her subsequent transition to Jewish education began with her conversion to Judaism in 2016 and has brought her to her first year as a middle school Jewish studies teacher in a Reform day school. *“I first started thinking about being a Jewish educator probably about 3–4 years ago, when an opportunity to become a Jewish educator kind of landed on my lap, it had never occurred to me beforehand. ... I’m not your typical story. I’m a convert—Jew by choice. I went on Birthright-Taglit in 2017 and as part of that they were doing an extension ... and one was at a place called Pardes, I signed up for it and really liked it.”* While Marta had planned on returning to a chaplain residency awaiting her at the end of the extension, she was vigorously recruited by an outreach coordinator from Pardes who convinced her to enter a three-year program for Jewish educators. It was during this program that Marta slowly fell in love with Jewish education. *“I ... have grown a passion for it and actually do see it as a vocational calling, but that happened gradually over time. Probably the moment was when I was student teaching. It hit home ... I really like this, I love working with kids, I also love teaching kids about how cool Judaism is. And I have a unique perspective because I wasn’t raised to think that. I kind of found it on my own.”*

Becoming a Jewish educator so soon after conversion can make it difficult to garner the necessary confidence to dive in. *“Four years [of receiving Jewish education], versus someone who had a lifetime of going to Hebrew school, actually being raised by Jewish family members.”* Marta confessed to wondering during her first week of teaching whether she’d made the correct decision, but mentorship has been key in helping her through the difficulties inherent in the first years of teaching. *“Luckily, I’ve had some really good mentors who have been able to get me off that ledge and give me perspective. ... Something the Jewish education world does very well is they throw mentors at you. In the best way.”* While Marta learned a lot in divinity school that translates to her current work, Pardes is where she came to feel truly prepared for her role as a Jewish educator, teaching her *“confidence in my own ability to look at Jewish texts and learn things Jewishly.”* The program continues to serve as a resource to her as she navigates her first years in the classroom.

While Marta was not exposed to Jewish educational experiences from a young age, the fact that she fell in love with Jewish education when she did is not altogether surprising given other factors. The deep impact teachers had on her as a child led her to always consider teaching as a vocation. *“Teaching has always kind of been an option in my book. ... Growing up having fantastic educators certainly inspired me to become an educator.”* Marta is also a lifelong learner and associates that closely with teaching. *“I would have landed in Jewish education somewhere or other, be that clergy, be that teaching an adult bible class at the synagogue. ... When you love learning, it tends to translate into a love of teaching as well, because you like to share your learning with others and encourage others to love learning.”* Lastly, Marta is motivated by a desire to work in a career that is meaningful to her and inspires her passion: *“It had to be something that fit who I was.”* She has found this as a Jewish educator. Even so, in the spirit of a true wanderer, while Marta has a deep sense of commitment to her work, she leaves plenty of space open to the possibility of further exploration. *“At the moment, my track record says the wind blows and something else will change. At the moment I see it as something for long term, but maybe not forever.”*

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# Appendix A

## Fielding Partners

### Fielding Partner Response Rates

Seed Sector	Response Rate
Birthright Israel	22%
Foundation for Jewish Camp	6%
Hillel International	N/A*
Masa Israel Journey	15%
NCSY	14%

Enabling Opportunity	Response Rate
Avodah	11%
Camp Ramah	74%
The Dorot Fellowship	37%
Hebrew Union College	N/A
Jewish Theological Seminary	33%
The Nachshon Project	45%
Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies	61%
Union for Reform Judaism	23%
Yeshiva University	28%

On the Journey Sample	Response Rate
Career Educators	28%

\* N/A indicates that the numbers of those who received the survey is not known due to it being distributed via social media.

# Appendix B

## Demographic Characteristics of Analysis Sample

	Current Jewish Educator		Former Jewish Educator		Never Jewish Educator		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<b>Jewish Experiences Growing Up</b>	An overnight camp	340 <sub>a</sub>	66%	524 <sub>a</sub>	68%	489 <sub>a</sub>	68%	1,353	67%
	A Jewish day camp	274 <sub>a</sub>	54%	447 <sub>a</sub>	58%	380 <sub>a</sub>	53%	1,101	55%
	A Jewish day elementary school	232 <sub>a</sub>	45%	366 <sub>a</sub>	47%	347 <sub>a</sub>	48%	945	47%
	A Jewish day middle school	207 <sub>a</sub>	40%	311 <sub>a</sub>	40%	295 <sub>a</sub>	41%	813	41%
	A Jewish day high school	181 <sub>a</sub>	35%	246 <sub>a</sub>	32%	256 <sub>a</sub>	36%	683	34%
	Yeshiva/seminary	129 <sub>b</sub>	25%	167 <sub>a,b</sub>	22%	136 <sub>a</sub>	19%	432	22%
	A supplementary Jewish school program, age 13 or younger	252 <sub>a</sub>	49%	382 <sub>a</sub>	49%	327 <sub>a</sub>	45%	961	48%
	A supplementary Jewish school program, after age 13	198 <sub>b</sub>	39%	293 <sub>b</sub>	38%	192 <sub>a</sub>	27%	683	34%
	Participated in Jewish youth group growing up	315 <sub>b</sub>	62%	459 <sub>b</sub>	59%	342 <sub>a</sub>	48%	1,116	56%
	Participated in organized group trip to Israel before college	301 <sub>b</sub>	59%	496 <sub>a,b</sub>	64%	481 <sub>a</sub>	67%	1,278	64%
None of the above	25 <sub>a</sub>	5%	16 <sub>b</sub>	2%	18 <sub>a,b</sub>	3%	59	3%	
<b>Regarding gender: I identify as... - Selected Choice</b>	Male	157 <sub>b</sub>	30%	284 <sub>b</sub>	36%	312 <sub>a</sub>	43%	753	37%
	Female	375 <sub>b</sub>	70%	511 <sub>b</sub>	64%	421 <sub>a</sub>	57%	1,307	63%
<b>Age Group</b>	20s	379 <sub>b</sub>	72%	328 <sub>c</sub>	42%	410 <sub>a</sub>	58%	1,117	55%
	30s	126 <sub>b</sub>	24%	406 <sub>c</sub>	52%	295 <sub>a</sub>	42%	827	41%
	40s+	24 <sub>b</sub>	5%	51 <sub>b</sub>	6%	4 <sub>a</sub>	1%	79	4%

Note: Values in the same row and subtable not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$  in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions. Cells with no subscript are not included in the test. Tests assume equal variances.

		Current Jewish Educator		Former Jewish Educator		Never Jewish Educator		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Denomination</b>	Orthodox	145 <sub>a</sub>	30%	185 <sub>a</sub>	26%	191 <sub>a</sub>	28%	521	28%
	Conservative	124 <sub>a</sub>	26%	214 <sub>a</sub>	30%	176 <sub>a</sub>	26%	514	27%
	Reform	120 <sub>a</sub>	25%	138 <sub>b</sub>	19%	146 <sub>a,b</sub>	21%	404	22%
	Just Jewish/Secular	87 <sub>b</sub>	18%	181 <sub>a</sub>	25%	171 <sub>a</sub>	25%	439	23%
<b>Jews of Color</b>	No	455 <sub>a</sub>	89%	682 <sub>a</sub>	91%	619 <sub>a</sub>	88%	1,756	89%
	Yes	56 <sub>a</sub>	11%	70 <sub>a</sub>	9%	86 <sub>a</sub>	12%	212	11%
<b>Did you have one or more family members who worked as Jewish educators?</b>	No	297 <sub>b</sub>	62%	437 <sub>b</sub>	60%	487 <sub>a</sub>	73%	1,221	65%
	Yes	179 <sub>b</sub>	38%	291 <sub>b</sub>	40%	180 <sub>a</sub>	27%	650	35%
<b>What is the highest level of education you have attained?</b>	Some college (undergraduate/	9 <sub>a</sub>	2%	10 <sub>a</sub>	1%	16 <sub>a</sub>	2%	35	2%
	Associate's degree	10 <sub>a</sub>	2%	10 <sub>a</sub>	1%	6 <sub>a</sub>	1%	26	1%
	Bachelor's degree	283 <sub>a</sub>	53%	321 <sub>b</sub>	40%	374 <sub>a</sub>	51%	978	47%
	Master's degree	186 <sub>a</sub>	35%	350 <sub>b</sub>	44%	230 <sub>a</sub>	31%	766	37%
	Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)	6 <sub>b</sub>	1%	68 <sub>c</sub>	9%	96 <sub>a</sub>	13%	170	8%
	Rabbinic/Cantorial Ordination (semikha)	38 <sub>b</sub>	7%	15 <sub>c</sub>	2%	1 <sub>a</sub>	0%	54	3%
	Other (Please describe)	3 <sub>a</sub>	1%	12 <sub>a</sub>	2%	8 <sub>a</sub>	1%	23	1%
	JD	2 <sub>a</sub>	0%	14 <sub>a</sub>	2%	7 <sub>a</sub>	1%	23	1%
Total	537	100%	800	100%	738	100%	2,075	100%	
<b>Participated in a Seed Sector</b>	No	91 <sub>a</sub>	17%	84 <sub>b</sub>	11%	100 <sub>a,b</sub>	14%	275	13%
	Yes	446 <sub>a</sub>	83%	716 <sub>b</sub>	90%	638 <sub>a,b</sub>	86%	1,800	87%
<b>Participated in an Enabling Opportunity</b>	No	288 <sub>b</sub>	54%	614 <sub>c</sub>	77%	659 <sub>a</sub>	89%	1,561	75%
	Yes	249 <sub>b</sub>	46%	186 <sub>c</sub>	23%	79 <sub>a</sub>	11%	514	25%
<b>Socioeconomic Status Growing Up</b>	Low	81 <sub>a</sub>	16%	104 <sub>a</sub>	14%	78 <sub>a</sub>	11%	263	13%
	Moderate	126 <sub>a,b</sub>	24%	223 <sub>b</sub>	30%	152 <sub>a</sub>	22%	501	26%
	High	308 <sub>a,b</sub>	60%	427 <sub>b</sub>	57%	453 <sub>a</sub>	66%	1,188	61%

Note: Values in the same row and subtable not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$  in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions. Cells with no subscript are not included in the test. Tests assume equal variances.

# Appendix C

## Factors to Items Correspondence

### Vocational Identity

Factor	Items
Settled	I know what type of work I would like to do for the rest of my life I know which type of occupation I would enjoy doing in the future I have made a firm decision regarding what I want to do for a living I have a clear sense of my occupational interests I know what kind of work suits me best
Provides Meaning	My work is a very important part of my identity I do the work that I do because it is personally fulfilling/meaningful Work is just something I do to pay the bills
Exploring	I want to explore different occupational fields over the course of my professional life I am currently exploring what I want to do for a living

*Question stem: Thinking about your current stage of your professional life, to what extent do you agree or disagree with... (7-pt Agree/Disagree scale)*

### Perspectives on Jewish Education

Factor	Items
Good Benefits	The level of pay for Jewish educators is quite good The financial prospects for Jewish educators are quite poor
Sense of a Larger Purpose	Jewish education is a noble profession Being a Jewish educator can help improve society
Poor Work-Life Balance	The working hours for Jewish educators are too long Healthy work/life balance is not achievable for Jewish educators Jewish education is a "high burnout" field
Limited Growth Opportunities	There are very few opportunities for professional advancement in the field of Jewish education It is unclear how to advance to more senior professional roles in Jewish education There are very few professional development opportunities in Jewish education
Job Security	After receiving appropriate training, it would be easy to find employment as a Jewish educator Jewish educator jobs are available in many places throughout North America Being a Jewish educator offers good job security

*Question stem: Thinking about your current perspectives on work in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (7-pt Agree/Disagree scale)*

## Stimuli

Factor	Items
Love of Jewish Learning	I really enjoy Jewish learning I want to share my love of Jewish learning with others
Personal Jewish Mission	I want to share the value of Jewish life with others I want future generations to receive a better Jewish education than I did I want to contribute to the Jewish community I want to express my commitment to the Jewish people
Jewish Growth	I want continued opportunities to strengthen my own religious identity I want to do work that is compatible with living a Jewish life (e.g., have Jewish holidays off)

Question stem: *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (7-pt Agree/Disagree scale)*

## Motivations

Factor	Items
Contributing to Others	Positively shaping future generations Being able to teach important subjects to others Inspiring others Impacting people's life paths Expressing my commitment to educating others
Contributing to Oneself	Being able to build strong interpersonal connections in my work Working in a place in which I have much in common with many of the staff members The challenge of being creative every day Making a living

Question stem: *When you think about what motivates you in your current professional life, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I am motivated by..." (7-pt Agree/Disagree scale)*

## Inhibitors

Factor	Items
Low Job Status in Comparison to Other Fields	<p>Better financial opportunities are available in other fields</p> <p>Better benefits exist in other fields</p> <p>There is a greater job security in other fields</p> <p>The financial compensation is limited</p> <p>There are limited benefits</p>
Lack of Personal Fit	<p>There is a mismatch between my personality and the job</p> <p>The work is disconnected from my core values</p> <p>The work is not as interesting as work in different fields</p> <p>There is a lack of fit with coworkers</p>
Parochial Context	<p>The work only benefits a limited segment of the population</p> <p>The work doesn't allow me to have contact with diverse populations</p> <p>There are limited work opportunities in my geographical location</p>
Unsupportive Work Environment	<p>There is a lack of role models, mentors, or coaches</p> <p>There is a lack of team spirit</p> <p>There are insufficient opportunities for professional development</p> <p>There are limited resources to do work effectively</p>

*Question stem: When you think about your current professional life and the factors that might drive you away from your current field, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I would consider leaving, or would possibly leave my field of work, if I perceive that..." (7-pt Agree/Disagree scale)*

## Assets

Factor	Items
Jewish Knowledge	<p>I am very knowledgeable about Jewish texts</p> <p>I am very knowledgeable about Jewish values</p> <p>I am very knowledgeable about how to perform Jewish rituals</p>
Hebrew Knowledge	<p>I can comprehend Hebrew text easily</p> <p>I can converse easily in Hebrew</p>

*Question stem: When you think about your personal level of Jewish knowledge, how true for you are the following statements? (5-pt scale, "Not True at All" to "Very True")*

# Appendix D

## Comparison of Main Analytical Groups

		Current Jewish Educator	Former Jewish Educator	Never Jewish Educator	Total	p <
<b>Vocational Identity*</b>	Settled	5.35	5.12	5.31	5.24	.001
	Exploring	4.24	4.28	4.10	4.21	.05
	Looking for Meaning	6.08	5.31	5.34	5.52	.001
<b>Perspectives on Jewish Education*</b>	Good Benefits	3.01	2.86	3.15	3.00	.001
	Altruism Stance	6.17	5.73	5.59	5.79	.001
	Poor Work-Life Balance	4.19	4.06	3.59	3.93	.001
	Limited Growth Opportunities	3.62	4.00	3.97	3.89	.001
<b>Stimuli*</b>	Job Security	4.56	4.32	4.31	4.38	.001
	Love of Subject Matter	6.15	5.42	5.26	5.55	.001
	Altruism	6.35	5.89	5.81	5.98	.001
<b>Motivation*</b>	Personal Growth/Commitment	6.10	5.52	5.43	5.64	.001
	Contributing to others	6.28	5.58	5.44	5.71	.001
<b>Inhibitors*</b>	Contributing to oneself	5.80	5.64	5.70	5.70	.001
	Low job status in comparison to other fields	4.51	4.91	4.89	4.80	.001
	Lack of personal fit	5.02	5.17	5.12	5.11	NS
	Limited circumstances	4.04	4.41	4.27	4.27	.001
<b>Assets**</b>	Unsupportive work environment	4.99	5.14	5.17	5.11	.05
	Jewish Knowledge	3.77	3.65	3.43	3.60	.001
<b>Inspirations*</b>	Hebrew Knowledge	2.89	2.89	2.61	2.79	.001
	Some of my role models were Jewish educators	5.50	5.27	4.97	5.22	.001
	I had people around me who engaged in Jewish learning	5.62	5.81	5.82	5.76	.05
	I had inspiring Jewish teachers	5.44	5.29	5.23	5.31	NS
	I had mediocre Jewish teachers	4.60	4.74	4.56	4.64	NS
	I had a close connection with a rabbi/cantor/other clergy member	4.88	4.59	4.52	4.64	.01

\* 7-point scale, "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"

\*\* 5-point scale, "Not True at All" to "Very True"

# Appendix E

## Preparing for Entry Survey

### Please take note of the following conventions:

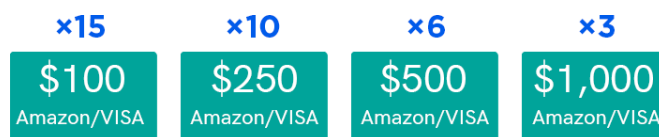
1. Block titles introducing each section as well as other headings will **not** be visible to respondents and are used for organizational and analytical purposes only.
2. All italicized information within brackets is for the online survey programmer and will also **not** be visible to respondents.

## Preparing for Entry Survey

*We hope that you and yours are doing well despite these unprecedented times. Even as we are all focused on the health, livelihoods, and wellbeing of ourselves and those close to us, we would like, for a moment, to draw your attention to the work of Jewish educators. You may or may not have heard that Rosov Consulting and CASJE, the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education, are in the midst of a broad study to understand the recruitment, retention, and development of Jewish educators. We have already begun the work of studying the retention of Jewish educators, and with this survey we hope to understand **how and why people enter Jewish education as a profession.***

*You have received this survey because you participated in Jewish experiences and programs in the past; based on our preliminary research, we know that some people who have participated in these experiences and programs have gone on to become Jewish educators, while many others have not. **Regardless of your interest in Jewish education as a profession, we want to know about your background, perceptions, and experiences so that we can understand how certain formative experiences and supports may lead some, but not all, to become Jewish educators.** Please note that in this survey, we use the term Jewish education broadly to include Jewish engagement, Jewish outreach, other similar activities, and traditional educational roles. While "Jewish educator" or "Jewish education" may not be terms that resonate with you, we use them in order to make the wording of the questions more manageable.*

*Please respond to the following 20-30-minute survey. To thank you for completing the survey, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of the following prizes:*



*Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. Information will be collected for research purposes only, and all data are confidential. The risks associated with participating in the study are minimal and are not greater than anything you may encounter in your daily life. All public reporting on this information will be done in the aggregate. Nothing you share here will be attributable to you. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Tehilla Becker, Project Associate, at [tbecker@rosovconsulting.com](mailto:tbecker@rosovconsulting.com).*

I have read the information above and I give my consent to participate in this study: [Required]

- I give my consent [If chosen, continue to Block I]
- I don't give my consent [if chosen, end survey]

## Block I: Educational Attainment and Experiences

First, we'd like to understand a little about your education and professional training experiences.

1. What is the highest level of education you have attained? [Required]
  - a. High school diploma/GED
  - b. Currently in college (undergraduate/yeshiva), but have not yet graduated [Exit Survey]
  - c. Some college (undergraduate/yeshiva), but did not graduate
  - d. Associate's degree
  - e. Bachelor's degree
  - f. Master's degree
  - g. Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)
  - h. Rabbinic/Cantorial Ordination [smicha]
  - i. Other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what year did you graduate high school? [Number validated entry] [Required]

[If Q1= [highest level of education is High school diploma/GED AND Q2=2019-2020 Exit Survey]

- 2.1 [Q1=e-h] Have you ever focused your studies (at any degree level) in the following subjects (e.g., majoring, minoring, or concentrating in these areas) (Select all that apply.)
  - a. General education
  - b. Jewish studies
  - c. Jewish education
  - d. Israel studies
  - e. Hebrew-related studies
  - f. Middle Eastern studies
  - g. Religious studies
  - h. No, I did not study any of these topics in-depth [mutually exclusive]

3. [If Q1=b-h] While in college (undergraduate)/yeshiva or thereafter, did you ever hold a Jewish leadership or fellowship role, including... (Select all that apply.)
  - a. Cornerstone Fellow
  - b. Madrich for Birthright Israel trip
  - c. Jewish student campus leader (e.g. student leaders in Hillel, AEPi, AIPAC, JLIC Fellow, Chabad board or student leader, Yavneh Fellows, etc.)
  - d. Nachshon Fellow
  - e. Youth Group Advisor (e.g., NCSY, BBYO, etc.)
  - f. Other. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. I did not participate in any. [mutually exclusive]



3.1 [If Q3=a (Cornerstone Fellow)] As a former Cornerstone Fellow, what is the best thing your camp has done to keep you connected to your camp?

- a. I am still connected to my camp and the thing that comes to mind is\_\_\_\_\_
- b. I am not connected to my camp right now yet the thing that comes to mind is\_\_\_\_\_
- c. I am still connected to my camp and I can't think of anything that my camp has done to foster that connection.
- d. I am no longer connected to my camp and I can't think of anything that my camp has done to foster that connection.

3.2 [If Q3=b (Birthright Madrich)] Were you a Taglit Birthright Fellow?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. In which of the following post-college/post-yeshiva Jewish training, certificate, or fellowship programs, if any, have you participated? (Select all that apply.)

- a. Graduate degree program in Jewish education or a related field
- b. Pardes Experiential Educators Program
- c. Pardes Day School Educators Program
- d. Avodah's Jewish Service Corps or Social Justice Fellowship
- e. Repair the World Fellowship
- f. Dorot Fellowship
- g. Masa Israel Teaching Fellowship
- h. Camp Ramah's Kerem Cohort
- i. URJ Youth Professional Training Initiative
- j. Ner LeElef
- k. Torah Umesorah's Aish Dos Leadership Institute
- l. Tikvah Fellowship
- m. Other. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- n. I have not participated in any [mutually exclusive].

5. [If Q4=a (Graduate degree in Jewish education) AND Q2.1 ≠ g (respondent studied Jewish or educational topics in-depth)] In which Jewish education (or related field) graduate degree program did you participate?

- a. A Hebrew Union College (HUC-JIR) Pre-Service Program (e.g. DeLet, MAJE)
- b. Jewish Theological Seminary's (JTS) Masters in Jewish Education Program
- c. A Yeshiva University (YU) Program (e.g. Pre-Service Master's Program, Two-Year Teacher Program)
- d. American Jewish University's (AJU) Masters in Teaching Program
- e. Middlebury's Master of Arts in Teaching Hebrew as a Second Language Program
- f. Spertus's Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies Program
- g. Brandeis's MA-EdM Program
- h. York University's Jewish Teacher Education Programme

i. Other. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_.

6. [If Q1≠a] Since age 22, how many years have you been in the workforce (full-time or part-time paid position(s))? (If less than a year, please enter 0) [Number Validation, required]

6.1 Which of the following describes your current employment status? Select all that apply.

- a. Employed full-time
- b. Employed part-time
- c. Full-time student
- d. Part-time student
- e. Unemployed and seeking work
- f. Unemployed and not seeking work
- g. Other. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6.2 [If Q6.1=e or f (unemployed)] Were you recently laid off or furloughed from a (paid) Jewish educator position (including full-time, part-time, and contract/seasonal work) because of COVID-19?

- a. Yes
- b. No

## Block II: Consideration of Jewish Education as a Profession

*Next, we'd like to understand whether you've ever considered and/or pursued work as a Jewish educator. As a reminder, we use the term Jewish educator broadly, to refer to those who work (post-college) in Jewish engagement, Jewish outreach, and similar activities, as well as traditional educational roles.*

7. [If Q6.1=a or b (employed)] Do you currently work (for pay) as a Jewish educator (including full-time, part-time, and contract/seasonal work)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. [If Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position)] For how many years have you worked as a Jewish educator (for pay, post-college)? (If less than a year, please enter 0) [Number Validation, required]

9. [If Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position)] Did you start out in the work world as a Jewish educator or did you switch over later?

- a. Yes, I started out in the work world as a Jewish educator.
- b. No, I switched to become a Jewish educator after having done something else.

10. [If Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position)] In which of the following settings are you currently (or just recently) employed as a Jewish educator? (Select all that apply.)

- a. Jewish day school
- b. Jewish supplementary school (e.g., Hebrew school, Sunday school, afterschool program)
- c. Jewish preschool or early childhood care

- d. Jewish summer camp
- e. Jewish youth group/movement
- f. College campus Jewish organization (e.g., Hillel, Chabad)
- g. Israel education/advocacy organization
- h. Jewish Federation/foundation
- i. JCC
- j. A department in a university/college
- k. Other synagogue educational program not already listed
- l. Engagement, social justice, service learning, or innovation organization (e.g., Moishe House, OneTable, Repair the World)
- m. Self-employed/independent contractor/"gig" worker
- n. Other. Please describe:\_\_\_\_\_

11. [If Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position)] Assuming available work opportunities, do you plan on continuing your work as a Jewish educator in the future?
- a. Yes, I hope to do so.
  - b. No, I am not interested.
  - c. I'm not sure right now.

- 11.1 [If Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position)] How does the COVID-19 pandemic change your feelings about the following: [Decreased, Slightly Decreased, No Change, Slightly Increased, Increased]
- a. Commitment to being a Jewish educator
  - b. Optimism about my future in Jewish education
  - c. Feelings of security about my career choice

12. [If Q6.2=No (Unemployed and not recently a Jewish educator)] OR Q7= No (currently employed, but NOT as a Jewish educator)] Have you *ever* worked (for pay, post-college) as a Jewish educator in any setting?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

- 12.1 [If Q12=Yes (PREVIOUSLY worked as Jewish educator)] For how many years did you work as a Jewish educator (for pay, post-college)? (If less than a year, please enter 0) [Number Validation, required]

13. [If Q12=Yes (PREVIOUSLY worked as Jewish educator)] In which of the following settings did you work as a Jewish educator? (Select all that apply.)
- a. Jewish day school
  - b. Jewish supplementary school (e.g., Hebrew school, Sunday school, afterschool program)
  - c. Jewish preschool or early childhood care
  - d. Jewish summer camp
  - e. Jewish youth group/movement
  - f. College campus Jewish organization (e.g., Hillel, Chabad)
  - g. Israel education/advocacy organization
  - h. Jewish Federation/foundation
  - i. JCC

- j. A \_\_\_\_\_ department in a university/college
- k. Other synagogue educational program not already listed
- l. Engagement, social justice, service learning, or innovation organization (e.g., Moishe House, OneTable, Repair the World)
- m. Self-employed/independent contractor/"gig" worker
- n. Other. Please describe:\_\_\_\_\_

14. [If Q12=No (Never worked as Jewish educator)] At any point after college, did you ever consider working for pay as a Jewish educator?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

15. [If Q14=Yes (Never worked as Jewish educator, but has considered working as Jewish educator)] In which of the following settings did you consider working as a Jewish educator? (Select all that apply.)
- a. Jewish day school
  - b. Jewish supplementary school (e.g., Hebrew school, Sunday school, afterschool program)
  - c. Jewish preschool or early childhood care
  - d. Jewish summer camp
  - e. Jewish youth group/movement
  - f. College campus Jewish organization (e.g., Hillel, Chabad)
  - g. Israel education/advocacy organization
  - h. Jewish Federation/foundation
  - i. JCC
  - j. A department in a university/college
  - k. Other synagogue educational program not already listed
  - l. Engagement, social justice, service learning, or innovation organization (e.g., Moishe House, OneTable, Repair the World)
  - m. Self-employed/independent contractor/"gig" worker
  - n. Other. Please describe:\_\_\_\_\_

16. [If Q14=Yes (Never worked as a Jewish educator, but has considered it) OR Q12=Yes (Worked as Jewish educator in the past, but not currently)] Do you plan on working for pay as a Jewish educator in the future?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure

- 16.1 [If Q14=Yes (Never worked as a Jewish educator, but has considered it) OR Q12=Yes (Worked as Jewish educator in the past, but not currently)] How does the COVID-19 pandemic change your feelings about the following: [Decreased, Slightly Decreased, No Change, Slightly Increased, Increased]

- a. Commitment to becoming a Jewish educator
- b. Optimism about potential work opportunities in Jewish education
- c. Feelings of security about my current career choice

17. [If Q7=No (Currently employed, but not currently a Jewish educator)] Previously, you indicated that you are not currently working as a Jewish educator. Are you working in a Jewish setting at all?

- a. No
- b. Yes. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

18. [If Q6.1 employed (picked a or b) AND Q7=No (Not currently a Jewish educator) AND Q17=No (does not work in a Jewish setting)] Currently, which of the categories below best describes the main industry you work in (regardless of your actual position)?

- a. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- b. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- c. Broadcasting
- d. Primary/Secondary (K-12) Education
- e. College, University, and Adult Education
- f. Other Education Industry
- g. Computer and Electronics Manufacturing
- h. Other Manufacturing
- i. Construction
- j. Finance and Insurance
- k. Government and Public Administration
- l. Health Care and Social Assistance
- m. Homemaker
- n. Hotel and Food Services
- o. Information Services and Data Processing
- p. Other Information Industry
- q. Legal Services
- r. Military
- s. Mining
- t. Publishing
- u. Real Estate, Rental and Leasing
- v. Religious
- w. Retail
- x. Scientific or Technical Services
- y. Software
- z. Telecommunications
- aa. Transportation and Warehousing
- bb. Utilities
- cc. Wholesale
- dd. Other Industry. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

19. [If Q6.1 employed (picked a or b) AND Q7=No (Not currently a Jewish educator) AND Q17=No (does not work in a Jewish setting)] In which of the following sectors is the primary organization you work for?

- a. Public sector (e.g., government)
- b. Private sector (e.g., most businesses and individuals)
- c. Nonprofit sector
- d. Don't know
- e. Other. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_.



19.1 [If Q6.1 employed (picked a or b) AND Q7=No (Not currently a Jewish educator) AND Q17=No (does not work in a Jewish setting)] How, if at all, does the COVID-19 pandemic change your feelings of security about your career choice? [Decreased, Slightly Decreased, No Change, Slightly Increased, Increased]

19.2 [If Q3=a (Cornerstone Fellow)] You indicated in a previous question that you were a Cornerstone Fellow. Thinking back, what are the **top three things** that you gained from your Cornerstone experience that you have used in other professional settings? [Randomize response option order; limit response to three]

- a. Openness to learning new skills
- b. Sense of self-worth
- c. Ability to innovate
- d. Confidence
- e. Creativity
- f. Taking initiative
- g. Managing emotions
- h. Setting and achieving goals
- i. Developing a strong work ethic
- j. Entrepreneurial thinking
- k. Adaptability
- l. Cross-cultural sensitivity
- m. Supervision of others
- n. Respecting individual differences
- o. Listening skills
- p. Conflict resolution
- q. Teamwork and working well with others
- r. Effective communication
- s. Responding to others needs
- t. Integrity
- u. Analyzing and solving complex problems
- v. Critical thinking and reasoning
- w. Civic participation and engagement
- x. Ethical and sound decision-making

### Block III: Vocational Identity and Perspectives

*Next, we'd like to understand a little more about your professional trajectory and perspectives on work life.*

20. **When you think about your current stage of professional life**, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-point scale]

- a. I have a clear sense of my occupational interests.
- b. I know what type of work I would like to do for the rest of my life.



- c. I know which type of occupation I would enjoy doing in the future.
- d. I have made a firm decision regarding what I want to do for a living.
- e. I know what kind of work suits me best.
- f. I am currently exploring what I want to do for a living.
- g. I want to explore different occupational fields over the course of my professional life.

21. **Thinking about your current perspectives on work in general**, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-point scale]

- a. Work is just something I do to pay the bills.
- b. I want to advance my skills and status with each new work-role I take.
- c. Each job I take is part of an intentional professional trajectory.
- d. I do the work that I do because it is personally fulfilling/meaningful.
- e. My work is a very important part of my identity.

[PAGE BREAK]

**Making good progress! You've completed about one-third of the survey.**

## Block IV: General Perceptions of Jewish Education as a Profession [ALL respondents]

[PAGE BREAK]

*Whether you've ever served as a Jewish educator or whether you've ever considered serving as a Jewish educator, we're curious about what you think of Jewish education as a profession. Even if you have no interest in becoming a Jewish educator, we'd like to know your general impressions about this work. As a reminder, we use the term Jewish educator broadly, to refer to those who work (post-college, for pay) in Jewish engagement, Jewish outreach, and similar activities, as well as traditional educational roles.*

22. Thinking about your perception of Jewish education as a profession, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale] [Randomize]

### *Job Benefits*

- a. Being a Jewish educator offers good job security.
- b. After receiving appropriate training, it would be easy to find employment as a Jewish educator.
- c. Jewish educators have a respectable social status.
- d. Jewish educators have long vacations.
- e. Jewish educator jobs are available in many places throughout North America

### *Altruistic views*

- f. Jewish education is a noble profession.
- g. Being a Jewish educator can help improve society.

### *Opportunities*

- h. Being a Jewish educator can lead to other jobs in the future.
- i. The level of pay for Jewish educators is quite good.



### *Inhibitors*

- j. There are very few opportunities for professional advancement in the field of Jewish education.
- k. There are very few professional development opportunities in Jewish education.
- l. Healthy work/life balance is not achievable for Jewish educators.
- m. The working hours for Jewish educators are too long.
- n. Jewish education is a “high burnout” field .
- o. It is unclear how to advance to more senior professional roles in Jewish education.
- p. The financial prospects for Jewish educators are quite poor.

## Block V: Jewish Background, Learning, and Contexts as a Young Person

*In the following section, we ask about your Jewish background and Jewish learning experiences growing up, as well as your connection to Jewish educators in your formative years. Even if you have never been interested in Jewish education as a potential professional path, we want to know which of the following statements are relevant to you.*

23. Did you grow up Jewish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

23.1 [If Q23=Yes (grew up Jewish)] Did you have one or more family members who worked as Jewish educators?

- a. Yes
- b. No

### Stimuli (External)

#### Role Models and Contexts

24. [If Q23=Yes (grew up Jewish)] When thinking about your exposure to Jewish educators growing up, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale]

- a. Some of my role models were Jewish educators.
- b. I had people around me who engaged in Jewish learning.
- c. I had inspiring Jewish teachers.
- d. I had mediocre Jewish teachers.
- e. I had a close connection with a rabbi/cantor/other clergy member.

25. *Thinking back to your childhood and young adult years, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: “I was actively **encouraged** to explore Jewish education as a profession by...”* [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale; include “Not applicable”]

- a. A family member
- b. A friend



- c. A mentor
- d. A Jewish educator or rabbi
- e. Someone else. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

26. *Thinking back to your childhood and young adult years, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I was actively **discouraged** from exploring Jewish education as a profession by...”*  
 [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale; include “Not applicable”]

- a. A family member
- b. A friend
- c. A mentor
- d. A Jewish educator or rabbi
- e. Someone else. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

27. [If Q6.2=Yes (recently laid off/furloughed from Jewish educator position) OR Q7=Yes (current Jewish educator) OR Q12=Yes (previously worked as Jewish educator)] Which of the following, if any, inspired you to work as a Jewish educator? (Select all that apply.)

- a. Participating in Jewish youth groups
- b. Participating in Jewish camps
- c. Attending Jewish day school
- d. Attending supplementary Jewish school
- e. Going to religious services
- f. Participating in a campus Jewish experience
- g. Participating in an Israel experience program
- h. My family
- i. An inspirational educator
- j. I had a job opportunity and decided to take it
- k. Other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- l. None of the above

27.1 [If Q27=g (Participated in Israel experience program)] In which of the following Israel experience programs did you participate?

- a. Birthright Israel
- b. Onward Israel
- c. A Masa Israel Journey program
- d. A gap year program in Israel
- e. A school-based program
- f. Something else. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

28. [If Q14=Yes (Never worked as Jewish educator, but has considered working as Jewish educator)] Which of the following, if any, inspired you to consider working as a Jewish educator? (Select all that apply.)

- a. Participating in Jewish youth groups
- b. Participating in Jewish camps

- c. Attending Jewish day school
- d. Attending supplementary Jewish school
- e. Going to religious services
- f. Participating in a campus Jewish experience
- g. Participating in an Israel experience program
- h. My family
- i. An inspirational educator
- j. Other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- k. None of the above

28.1 [If Q28=g (Participated in Israel experience program)] In which of the following Israel experience programs did you participate?

- a. Birthright Israel
- b. Onward Israel
- c. A Masa Israel Journey program
- d. A gap year program in Israel
- e. A school-based program
- f. Something else. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Assets (continued)

*You're about half-way through the survey!*

#### Cultural Capital

29. When you think about *your personal level of Jewish knowledge*, how true for you are the following statements? ["Not True at All" to "Very True", 5-pt scale]
- a. I am very knowledgeable about Jewish texts.
  - b. I am very knowledgeable about Jewish values.
  - c. I am very knowledgeable about how to perform Jewish rituals.
  - d. I can converse easily in Hebrew.
  - e. I can comprehend Hebrew text easily.

### Personal Assets

#### Financial Capital

30. Which of these statements best describes your household's typical financial situation when you were growing up?
- a. Could not make ends meet
  - b. Just managed to make ends meet
  - c. Had enough money
  - d. Had some extra money



- e. Was well off
  - f. I prefer not to answer
31. [If Q30=a–c and Q23=Yes (grew up Jewish)] When you were growing up, to what extent did your household’s financial situation *prevent* you from participating in Jewish experiences as a young person?
- a. To a large extent
  - b. To a moderate extent
  - c. A little
  - d. Not at all
  - e. Not sure
32. In college, did you participate in any paid Jewish internships or paid Jewish leadership programs?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
33. [If Q32=Yes (participated in paid Jewish internships)] Would you have participated in those experiences if they were not paid?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure

## Block VI: Professional Motivators and Inhibitors

### Stimuli (Internal/Intrinsic)

34. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale] [Randomize]

#### *Love of Subject Matter*

- a. I really enjoy Jewish learning.
- b. [If Q34 a = Agree or strongly agree] I want to share my love of Jewish learning with others.

#### *Altruism*

- c. I want to share the value of Jewish life with others.
- d. I want future generations to receive a better Jewish education than I did.
- e. I want to contribute to the Jewish community.
- f. I want to express my commitment to the Jewish people.

#### *Personal Growth/Commitment*

- g. I want continued opportunities to strengthen my own religious identity.
- h. I want to do work that is compatible with living a Jewish life (e.g., have Jewish holidays off).

In the following questions, we will ask you a bit about what attracts or motivates you to pursue work in some fields, and what might inhibit you from pursuing work in other fields.

### Motivators

35. [If Q6>0 (in the workforce for at least 1 year)] When you think about *what motivates you in your current professional life*, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I am motivated by..." [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale; Randomize]

#### *Altruism (continued)*

- a. Being part of a profession that makes an important contribution to society
- b. Positively shaping future generations
- c. Being able to teach important subjects to others
- d. Working with young people
- e. Impacting people's life paths
- f. Inspiring others
- g. Expressing my commitment to educating others

#### *Love of Subject Matter*

- h. Expressing my love for the particular subject matter.
- i. Opportunities for continued learning

#### *Job Benefits*

- j. The challenge of being creative every day
- k. Being able to build strong interpersonal connections in my work
- l. Working in a place in which I have much in common with many of the staff members
- m. Making a living

36. [If Q6=0 (not yet a part of the workforce)] When you think about your *future professional life and what might attract you to pursue some professional opportunities over others*, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I am motivated by..." [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale] [Randomize]

#### *Altruism (continued)*

- a. Being part of a profession that makes an important contribution to society
- b. Positively shaping future generations
- c. Being able to teach important subjects to others
- d. Working with young people
- e. Impacting people's life paths
- f. Inspiring others
- g. Expressing my commitment to educating others

*Love of Subject Matter*

- h. Expressing my love for the particular subject matter
- i. Opportunities for continued learning

*Job Benefits*

- j. The challenge of being creative every day
- k. Being able to build strong interpersonal connections in my work
- l. Working in a place in which I have much in common with many of the staff members
- m. Making a living

**Inhibitors**

37. [If Q6=0 (not yet a part of the workforce)] How likely are you to pursue work in a field where...: [Not at all likely, Somewhat likely, Likely, Very likely, Extremely likely, 5-pt scale] [Randomize]

*Benign Inhibitors*

- a. There is a mismatch between my personality and the job
- b. There is a lack of fit with coworkers
- c. The work is not as interesting as work in different fields
- d. The work is disconnected from my core values

*Constricting Inhibitors*

- e. The financial compensation is limited
- f. There are limited benefits
- g. Better financial opportunities are available in other fields
- h. Better benefits exist in other fields
- i. There is a greater job security in other fields
- j. There is a lack of team spirit
- k. Unsupportive work environments
- l. There are insufficient opportunities for professional development
- m. There are unclear pathways to promotion
- n. There is a lack of role models, mentors, or coaches
- o. There are limited resources to do work effectively
- p. The work is considered low status

*Personal Inhibitors*

- q. It is challenging to keep work/life balance
- r. There are limited work opportunities in my geographical location

*Circumstantial Inhibitors*

- s. The work only benefits a limited segment of the population
- t. The work doesn't allow me to have contact with diverse populations



38. [If Q6>0 (in the workforce for at least 1 year)] When you think about your *current professional life and the factors that might drive you away from your current field*, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? “I would consider leaving, or would possibly leave my field of work if I perceive that...” [Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 7-pt scale]

*Benign Inhibitors*

- a. There is a mismatch between my personality and the job
- b. There is a lack of fit with coworkers
- c. The work is not as interesting as work in different fields
- d. The work is disconnected from my core values

*Constricting Inhibitors*

- e. The financial compensation is limited
- f. There are limited benefits
- g. Better financial opportunities are available in other fields
- h. Better benefits exist in other fields
- i. There is a greater job security in other fields
- j. There is a lack of team spirit
- k. Unsupportive work environments
- l. There are insufficient opportunities for professional development
- m. There are unclear pathways to promotion
- n. There is a lack of role models, mentors, or coaches
- o. There are limited resources to do work effectively
- p. The work is considered low status

*Personal Inhibitors*

- q. It is challenging to keep work/life balance
- r. There are limited work opportunities in my geographical location

*Circumstantial Inhibitors*

- s. The work only benefits a limited segment of the population
- t. The work doesn't allow me to have contact with diverse populations

***Almost there! You have completed more than three-quarters of the survey.***

- 38.1 [If Q3=a (Cornerstone Fellow)] ***The following question is optional, since you indicated that you are an alumn of the Cornerstone Fellowship through FJC:*** Given the world today, how do you think Jewish camps can change and evolve to best equip the next generation of youth? [optional response, paragraph text box]

## BLOCK VII: General Demographics

*In this final section, we will ask you some general demographic questions, so we can understand our sample of survey takers. As a reminder, the information you provide is confidential, and results are only going to be presented in the aggregate.*

39. Regarding gender: I identify as...
- Male
  - Female
  - Gender fluid/Non-binary
  - Something else. Please describe
  - Prefer not to answer

40. Regarding ethnicity/race: I identify as... (Select all that apply.)
- African American
  - Asian
  - Black/African
  - Latinx/Hispanic
  - Middle Eastern/North African
  - Mixed-Race/Multiracial
  - Native American/Alaska Native
  - Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
  - White
  - Prefer not to answer *[mutually exclusive]*
  - Other. Please describe \_\_\_\_\_

41. What is your birth year? *[Open-ended, number validated (Min 1940, max 2002)]*

42. Until age 18, where were you mostly raised?
- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. United States or Canada | e. Western Europe       |
| b. Israel                  | f. South America        |
| c. Former Soviet Union     | g. Another country      |
| d. Eastern Europe          | (Please specify: _____) |

43. Are you married or partnered?
- Yes
  - No

## Block VIII: Jewish Background

44. Which of the following best describes you?
- I'm not Jewish.
  - I'm Jewish.
  - I'm Jewish culturally, but not religiously.
  - I'm Jewish both culturally and religiously.
  - I'm Jewish and something else. Please explain what "else": \_\_\_\_\_
  - It's complicated. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

45. *[If Q43=Yes (married or partnered)]* How does your partner identify?
- They are not Jewish

- b. They are Jewish
- c. They are Jewish culturally, but not religiously
- d. They are Jewish both culturally and religiously
- e. They are Jewish and something else. What “else”? Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. It’s complicated. Please explain:

46. [If Q44 ≠a (respondents are Jewish)] Regarding denomination, I consider myself to be:
- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Chabad          | g. Orthodox               |
| b. Conservative    | h. Post-denominational    |
| c. Haredi          | i. Reconstructionist      |
| d. Humanist        | j. Reform                 |
| e. Just Jewish     | k. Secular                |
| f. Modern Orthodox | l. Other. Please specify: |

47. [If Q23=yes (grew up Jewish) AND Q44 ≠a (respondents are Jewish)] Which of the following Jewish experiences have you attended/participated in prior to college, if any? Please select all that apply.
- a. An overnight camp that had Shabbat services and/or a Jewish education program
  - b. A Jewish day camp
  - c. A Jewish day elementary school
  - d. A Jewish day middle school
  - e. A Jewish day high school
  - f. Yeshiva/seminary
  - g. A supplementary Jewish school program (e.g., Hebrew/Sunday school/Jewish afterschool), age 13 or younger
  - h. A supplementary Jewish school program (e.g., Hebrew/Sunday school/Jewish afterschool), after age 13
  - i. A Jewish youth group/movement
  - j. Organized group trip to Israel
  - k. Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. None of the above

## Block IX: Requesting Emails

48. [Required] Thank you so much for completing this survey. Are you willing to be contacted in the future to provide additional data, if needed?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

*Your personal information is confidential and will not be shared with others. Your responses to the survey will be analyzed separately and will not include your personal information or organizational affiliation.*

49. [If Q48 = Yes] Please provide the following information. It will only be used to contact you for participation in additional research and to send you a gift card should you win any drawings:

- a. Your first name \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Your email address \_\_\_\_\_.

50. [If Q48=No] In order to send you the gift card, should you win the survey drawing, please provide the following information:

- a. Your first name \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Your email address \_\_\_\_\_.



# Appendix F

## Preparing for Entry Interview Protocols

### Current Jewish Educators

#### Note to Interviewer:

Prior to conducting the interview, you should know if this person is:

- Currently a Jewish educator
- If they've participated in a seed sector (if yes, which one)
- If they've participated in an enabling opportunity (if yes, which one)

#### Introduction

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This interview is part of a major research study about the recruitment, development and retention of Jewish educators in North America. The project is being overseen by the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education and funded by the William Davidson Foundation and the Jim Joseph Foundation. Insights from this conversation and similar ones will help us better understand who is attracted to the field of Jewish education and why, and what sort of experiences ignite or inhibit interest to enter the field.*

*The interview should take about 45 minutes. I will be taking notes and, with your permission, also recording the interview. All of this will remain confidential. We'll be using summaries and will remove all identifying information from any quotes or examples we use.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

1. Tell me about the work you do today. What's your job?
2. [If it's related to Jewish education] Do you think of yourself as a Jewish educator?
  - a. [If no] How do you think of yourself professionally?
3. If you think back, when did you first consider working as a Jewish educator [If Q2=no, substitute with response to 2a]?
  - a. Were you working in another field at the time?
    - i. [If yes] Why did you end up deciding to make a change?
4. Were there other fields you considered working in?

- a) [If yes] What were the considerations? What were the things you were weighing?
5. [If Q5=yes] Was there one moment that you can identify when you decided you wanted to work as a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a?
- a) If yes, can you describe that moment?
6. If no, can you give me a sense of the process that led you to choose to work as a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a?

*Now we'd like to turn to some of the people and/or experiences that may have inspired you in this direction.*

7. Thinking back, can you describe any inspirations that led you to the work you do today, either indirectly or through direct encouragement? (*probe: family members, inspirational individuals, peers, events/experiences*)
- a) What was it about these people or experiences that inspired you to consider becoming/become a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a? In which settings did you encounter these role models?
- b) Do you think you would have become a Jewish educator if you hadn't met these people/had these experiences?
8. Have there been any experiences (either direct or witnessed) or individuals that discouraged you from becoming a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a? (*probe for direct discouragement and contact with other Jewish educators*)
- a) [If yes] In what way?
9. Were there any experiences that made you seriously reconsider whether you wanted to be a Jewish educator?
10. What factors have enabled you to overcome these challenging pressures and persist in choosing to become a Jewish educator?

*Finally, we'd like to turn to talking more about experiences you've had that may have helped develop and prepare you for your work as a Jewish educator:*

11. [If participated in a Seed Sector] In your survey response, you said that you had been in [Seed Sector]. Was there anything about that experience that influenced the work you do today?
12. If you think back over the last 10 years, what programs or experiences have particularly developed your capacity and interest in becoming a Jewish educator?

- a) What did you gain/learn from that program?
13. [If indicated participation in an Enabling Opportunity in the survey and didn't mention it] In the survey, you indicated that you participated in [Program Name]. Has this program impacted your capacity and interest in becoming a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a in any way?
- a. What didn't you learn from the program that you wish you had?
- b. Given where you are today in your work in Jewish education would you choose that program again, why/why not?
14. [If participated in an Enabling Opportunity] By the time you signed up for that program, how sure were you that you wanted to work as a Jewish educator in some way?
15. [If participated in an Enabling Opportunity] What made you choose [Program Name] over any alternative(s) you considered? What about it was more attractive than the other options? (*probe for specific alternatives if not mentioned*)
16. [If from Group 5 we want to confirm] Have you ever participated in any kind of Jewish education training program?
- a) [If not] Why not? (*probe: Was this intentional? Did the opportunity never come their way? Did they not know about opportunities available?*)
17. To circle back to where we started the interview, to what extent do you feel your choice of work reflects a deeper sense of your personal identity (who you are), as opposed to being simply something you do to earn a living?
- a. To what extent do you see this work as something you'll do for the long-term?

*Thank you very much for your time and your input. As a thank you for participating in this conversation, we will be sending you \$50 gift card when we complete all the interviews- this should be in a month or two. Thank you again!*

## Not Currently Jewish Educators

### Introduction

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This interview is part of a major research study about the recruitment, development and retention of Jewish educators in North America. The project is being overseen by the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education and funded by the William Davidson Foundation and the Jim Joseph Foundation. As part of this research, we are speaking with people who are not currently Jewish educators. Insights from this conversation and similar ones will help us better understand who is attracted to the field of Jewish education and why, and what sort of experiences ignite or inhibit interest to enter the field.*

*The interview should take about 45 minutes. I will be taking notes and, with your permission, also recording the interview. All of this will remain confidential. We'll be using summaries and will remove all identifying information from any quotes or examples we use.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

1. Tell me about the work you do today. What's your job?
2. If you think back, when did you first consider working in the field you are currently working in?
3. Were there other fields you considered working in (aside from the one you currently work in)?
  - a) [If yes] What were the considerations? What were the things you were weighing?
  - b) [If yes] How did you choose one path over the other?
4. Have you ever worked as a Jewish educator in any context?
  - a) [If yes] Did that have any bearing on the choice of work you do?
5. Did you ever consider working as a Jewish educator as your primary job?
  - a) [If yes] What about Jewish education was appealing to you?
  - b) [If yes] What were the things that prevented you from becoming a Jewish educator?
6. If you try to imagine the inspirations that led you to the work you do today, can you describe what they were? (*probe*: family members, inspirational individuals, peers)
  - a) What was it about these people or experiences that inspired you to do the work you do today?

- a) [If yes] What were the considerations? What were the things you were weighing?
5. [If Q5=yes] Was there one moment that you can identify when you decided you wanted to work as a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a?
- a) If yes, can you describe that moment?
6. If no, can you give me a sense of the process that led you to choose to work as a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a?

*Now we'd like to turn to some of the people and/or experiences that may have inspired you in this direction.*

7. Thinking back, can you describe any inspirations that led you to the work you do today, either indirectly or through direct encouragement? (*probe: family members, inspirational individuals, peers, events/experiences*)
- a) What was it about these people or experiences that inspired you to consider becoming/become a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a? In which settings did you encounter these role models?
- b) Do you think you would have become a Jewish educator if you hadn't met these people/had these experiences?
8. Have there been any experiences (either direct or witnessed) or individuals that discouraged you from becoming a Jewish educator/substitute from Q2a? (*probe for direct discouragement and contact with other Jewish educators*)
- a) [If yes] In what way?
9. Were there any experiences that made you seriously reconsider whether you wanted to be a Jewish educator?
10. What factors have enabled you to overcome these challenging pressures and persist in choosing to become a Jewish educator?

*Finally, we'd like to turn to talking more about experiences you've had that may have helped develop and prepare you for your work as a Jewish educator:*

11. [If participated in a Seed Sector] In your survey response, you said that you had been in [Seed Sector]. Was there anything about that experience that influenced the work you do today?
12. If you think back over the last 10 years, what programs or experiences have particularly developed your capacity and interest in becoming a Jewish educator?

## Not Currently Jewish Educators (Participated in Enabling Opportunities)

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This interview is part of a major research study about the recruitment, development and retention of Jewish educators in North America. The project is being overseen by the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education and funded by the William Davidson Foundation and the Jim Joseph Foundation. As part of this research, we are speaking with people who are not currently Jewish educators. Insights from this conversation and similar ones will help us better understand who is attracted to the field of Jewish education and why, and what sort of experiences ignite or inhibit interest to enter the field.*

*The interview should take about 45 minutes. I will be taking notes and, with your permission, also recording the interview. All of this will remain confidential. We'll be using summaries and will remove all identifying information from any quotes or examples we use.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

1. Tell me about the work you do today. What's your job?
2. If you think back, when did you first consider working in the field you are currently working in?
3. Were there other fields you considered working in (aside from the one you currently work in)?
  - a) [If yes] What were the considerations? What were the things you were weighing?
  - b) [If yes] How did you choose one path over the other?

4. Have you ever worked as a Jewish educator in any context?

What about Jewish education was appealing to you when you entered the field?

5. If you try to imagine the inspirations that led you to become a Jewish educator, can you describe what they were? (*probe*: family members, inspirational individuals, peers)
  - a) What was it about these people or experiences that inspired you to work as a Jewish educator?

What were the things that prevented you from staying a Jewish educator?

- a) [If yes] Did your work as a Jewish educator have any bearing on the choice of work you do?
6. In the survey, you indicated that you participated in [Enabling Opportunity Name]. Did you consider other alternatives to the program you chose?

- a) [If yes] What made you choose [Program Name] over the alternative(s)? What about it was more attractive than the other options?
7. What did you gain/learn from that program?
8. In what ways was that program most valuable to you?
9. When entering that program, what were your thoughts about becoming a Jewish educator? How sure were you that you wanted to work as a Jewish educator in some way?
10. In which ways, if any, did the program impact your capacity and interest in becoming a Jewish educator?
11. Was there one moment that you can identify when you decided you wanted to work in a field that was not Jewish education?
- a) If yes, can you describe that moment?
- b) If no, can you give me a sense of the process that led you to choose one path versus the other?
12. To circle back to where we started the interview, to what extent do you feel your choice of work reflects a deeper sense of your personal identity (who you are), as opposed to being simply something you do to earn a living?
- a) To what extent do you see this as something you'll do for the long-term?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish up?

*Thank you very much for your time and your input. As a thank you for participating in this conversation, we will be sending you a \$50 gift card when we complete all the interviews- this should be in a month or two. Thank you again!*

The Collaborative for Applied Studies in Jewish Education (CASJE) is an evolving community of researchers, practitioners, and philanthropic leaders dedicated to improving the quality of knowledge that can be used to guide the work of Jewish education. The Collaborative supports research shaped by the wisdom of practice, practice guided by research, and philanthropy informed by a sound base of evidence.

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The Jim Joseph Foundation seeks to foster compelling, effective Jewish learning experiences for young Jews in the United States. Established in 2006, the Jim Joseph Foundation has awarded more than \$600 million in grants with the aspiration that all Jews, their families, and their friends will be inspired by Jewish learning experiences to lead connected, meaningful, and purpose-filled lives and make positive contributions to their communities and the world.

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