



LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

Leading the Future: Radically Different Models of Supplemental Jewish Education

by Avi Kaplan

April 16th, 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Four Radically Different Schools.....	5
Settings.....	5
Leadership Following Change.....	7
The Consultant Becomes the Director.....	9
Hired to Bring Change.....	14
Building a School from the Ground Up.....	18
Analysis of Leading Change.....	21
The Name Matters.....	22
Needs of the Community.....	23
Readiness for Change.....	25
Staffing, Training, and Teacher Support.....	27
Engagement as the Hook for Literacy.....	29
Credo Statement.....	31
Bibliography.....	34
Artifacts.....	36
Interview Questions.....	36
Camp Sababa Details.....	37
Mayim and Mayim Tamid Details.....	39
Noar Details.....	44
Makom Community Details.....	48

Introduction

My own Jewish educational experience, as a student and then a madrikah, were lived examples of an educator focusing on literacy and a different educator focusing on putting the learner at the center. From Kindergarten through 6th grade the religious school I went to tried to impart Jewish literacy upon me and my classmates, but did not engage us. Although I found what we were learning there very valuable and important, my classmates were entirely resentful by the time we began 7th grade. It was at that point that a new director began at my religious school, and under her leadership the school began working to engage students and parents as well, which resulted in more learning because the students became invested in their Jewish education.

I have long since believed that it is good practice to shift the learning environment to best fit the needs of the students, instead of trying to force students to conform to the learning environment. It is easier to only change surface level, like giving the school a new name or calling it a camp instead, but changing what it is called is not the same as changing what happens (Litman, 2017). It is difficult to substantively change from something flawed, and hard to build something untested, but I still believe that it is worth it to try.

For most of my life, I did fit the learning environment, but I could see others struggling. I spoke up about ways to make it better for them, without harming anyone else (typically the changes would have helped more than just that student). However, my suggestions were often ignored or dismissed out of hand. Those experiences are what led me to seek a leadership position, so that I can succeed in those efforts. My goal as an educational leader is to be able to go to a community, analyze and understand its current practices, goals and needs. From that I want to be able to design a structure that will best fit that community with students at the center, and the ability to adjust and even reinvent it as the community changes over time.

Proverbs 22:6 says *תִּנְחֵל לְנַעַר עַל־פִּי דְרָכּוֹ גַם כִּי־יִזְקִין לֹא־יִסְוֶה מִמֶּנָּה* train a youth according to their path, and they will not swerve from it even in old age. What I interpret this to mean is that students should be at the center of their education, and the paths we use to teach them should be based on what they need, both individually and collectively. Therefore, I chose to look at educators who created new models for their supplementary schools that they thought would work better for their students and their communities.

This casebook focuses on the educational leaders at four supplementary Jewish schools that have radically different ways of structuring supplemental Jewish education. By that I mean something other than the current standard practice of Jewish supplemental education which I define as a teacher teaching a class of students grouped by grade in a classroom on a weekend morning and/or a weekday afternoon, and at that school the students learn Judaics and Hebrew with the end goal of the students going through Bet Mitzvah. Just because these characteristics have largely been accepted as “the grammar of schooling” does not mean they must be, or should be (Heller Stern, 2004).

Indeed, there are schools that have rejected that assumption, and created something radically different. I explore my assumption that these radically different models they use were created out of a dissatisfaction with the way the standard model handled the enduring dilemma between Jewish literacy and student engagement and that part of their design intentionally addresses that. ‘Jewish literacy’ meaning knowledge about Judaism, Jewish practices, Hebrew, Israel, Jewish values, how to participate in Jewish life, and other kinds of content for learners to know; and ‘student engagement’ meaning how committed to and excited about the school and Judaism the students are, and about designing the education for those learners.

Out of my research, four Jewish educational programs in particular stood out:

- Camp Sababa, at Temple Judea in Tarzana, California;
- Mayim and Mayim Tamid at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, Massachusetts;
- Noar, at Temple Sinai in Atlanta, Georgia;
- and Makom Community, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

These sites have recognized the importance of creating new ways of educating new students in a new time (Ter Kuile, 2020). I want to understand each school's model and how it addresses this leadership dilemma in order to inform my own philosophy of changing underlying structures to support student learning that promote both engagement and literacy.

Four Radically Different Schools

Settings

Camp Sababa

Camp Sababa, located at Temple Judea in Tarzana, California, is run by Rabbi Eric Rosenstein. The stated goals of Sababa are to build community and create friendships among the campers, for them to engage with Jewish prayer, music, and culture, and to learn by exploring (Temple Judea, 2024). Additionally, Sababa is built as a supplement to or replacement for Judea's religious school (Temple Judea, 2024), meeting for two weeks in the summer, one week in the winter, and on four Saturdays throughout the school year (Temple Judea, 2024). It meets at Temple Judea, and over the summer shares space with the preschool.

Mayim and Mayim Tamid

Mayim and Mayim Tamid are two of the education programs at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, Massachusetts, led by Rachel Happel. Mayim is an experiential and project-based learning school that meets on Sunday mornings and weekday afternoons, with students attending once a week (Mayim Overview). Mayim Tamid, which is also a project-based learning model, is a multi-day after school program where students can learn Hebrew, experience Jewish life cycles and events in real time, and build relationships and community (Mayim Tamid). Both Mayim and Mayim Tamid are Kindergarten through fourth grade programs.

Noar

Noar, located at Temple Sinai in Atlanta, Georgia, is run by Marisa Kaiser. The stated goals of Noar are to engage students in their community and build Jewish life skills, as well as building Hebrew decoding and prayer skills (Noar, 2023). In order to achieve those goals, the school decoupled their Hebrew program from their Sunday program, which meets for one hour a

week in the neighborhoods students live in (Noar, 2024). They adjusted their engagement expectations for Hebrew, a form of Jewish literacy, in a way that increases both the engagement of the students at their Hebrew Chavurah, as well as their learning.

Makom Community

Makom Community, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is led by Beverly Socher-Lerner. The stated goals of Makom are for the students to gain fluency and comfort in Jewish tradition, for both parents and their children (Makom Community, 2024). In order to achieve these goals, Makom meets every day after school, running a bus to seven day schools, with families able to pick on which days they come (Makom Community, 2024). Unlike the other sites, Makom is an independent Jewish supplemental school, not connected to a congregation.

Leadership Following Change

Rabbi Eric Rosenstein is the Director of Education at Temple Judea, overseeing both the religious school and Camp Sababa. Camp Sababa was the brainchild of Rabbi Bruce Raff, the previous Director of Education, and has been guided by Rachel Altfeld and Becky Marcus during their residencies with Temple Judea while in the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. The values Rabbi Rosenstein holds as a Jewish educator are empowering learners to ask deep questions, caring for learners, keeping the learning space sacred, and helping students to find their hook into the learning, the thing that engages them in the tradition, be that fun, friends, or anything else.

Camp Sababa was created to make it possible for families, who were not able to attend religious school due to the schedule, to give a Jewish educational experience to their children. However, now most students are enrolled in both programs, coming in the summer and winter for Sababa, and to the religious school during the fall and spring.

Camp Sababa's compact schedule, three weeks and four days throughout the year, ends up providing more learning hours than the religious school at Temple Judea. Additionally, Sababa has a completely different curriculum than the religious school. Each summer, all the campers learn about the same topic, at their appropriate developmental level, in what Rabbi Rosenstein predicts will be a five, six, or seven year topic cycle, with curricular revisions when the cycle repeats.

In essence, according to Rabbi Rosenstein, Camp Sababa is a "content-rich Jewish day vacation bible school that combines the best of Jewish summer camp with the best of Jewish experiential education." It is designed to be able to replace an entire school year's worth of Jewish learning, and centers student learning in the camp experience. It allows the children and

teens more time to develop strong bonds with each other, and competes well with the larger more established Jewish summer camps in the area.

Looking at the future of Camp Sababa, Rabbi Rosenstein anticipates that the biggest challenges for it will be determining how to grow the camp while maintaining the feeling of intimacy, sharing space with Judea's early childhood education program, and keeping up with the expensive cost of running it.

He also said that the parents of the campers in Sababa greatly appreciate it. They say that it is right for their time constraints and/or their finances, and that many parents love Sababa so much that they wish there was more of it to send their children to.

When asked about Jewish literacy and student engagement, Rabbi Rosenstein said that in Sababa there is no tension between those two values because Sababa is the way he manages that tension between those values in the religious school.

Finally, Rabbi Rosenstein said that the main enduring dilemma he encounters in Camp Sababa, is around teen autonomy and leadership growth. He values the camp being run smoothly and competently, but he also values letting teens make mistakes so they can grow and come into their own as leaders. He wants to give them enough leeway that they can learn, but not so much that they spin out of control, "holding them to account kindly, gently, but with boundaries."

The Consultant Becomes the Director

Rachel Happel is the Senior Director of Learning and Engagement at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, Massachusetts, overseeing all the educational programs for kindergarten through 12th grade. Her association with Temple Beth Shalom began fourteen years ago when she was engaged as a consultant to gather information from focus groups of parents by asking questions like “why are you seeking a Jewish education for your child?” In that role she helped develop the kindergarten through 4th grade program Mayim. She was later hired as a teacher for Mayim, and then as the educational leader for Temple Beth Shalom. From that position, she developed Mayim Tamid, an additional kindergarten through 4th grade program.

Mayim is Temple Beth Shalom’s one day a week model, for their kindergarteners through 4th graders. One of the main innovations in its structure. Sessions are after school on weekdays and on Sunday mornings. Students are required to come to only one of those sessions a week. Families can sign up for which day works best for them. The teacher covers the same material with different students each day of the week.

It was developed over the course of two years, with a taskforce, consultants, one of whom being Happel, members of the congregation who worked in education, and focus groups. What Happel and the others found was that parents wanted their children to have a Jewish identity and a Jewish community. In order to meet that need, the taskforce did a great deal of best practices research, investigating successful models: summer camps, other Jewish supplementary schools, extracurricular programs, outdoor programs, etc. The task force hoped to draw information and inspiration from these models, understanding what type and elements of such a program could create a deep sense of belonging and learning in its students.

The majority of families with a child in that age range at Temple Beth Shalom opt for Mayim, with the most popular days of the week for after school attendance being Tuesday and Thursday, and Sunday morning being one of the least popular options.

A few years into Mayim, after Happel had been hired in her current directing role, a number of families and students expressed great interest in coming to Mayim on more than one day a week for additional learning. This could not be accomplished in Mayim, because the structure had the same lesson repeating for each session in a given week. There was also a growing population of parents who wanted an after school childcare program more than one day a week. Those two desires, more content and more time, were the impetuses to create Mayim Tamid.

Mayim Tamid began with only nine students. Students can come two, three, four, or five days a week. The most popular options are two days a week, for those who want plenty of time for other after school options, and five days a week, for those parents who need their children to be in a safe place for the hours following public school. The additional time also allowed the curriculum to have more breadth and depth than Mayim's, with students learning more deeply about more topics. The increased attendance at Temple Beth Shalom also prompted Happel to create bus transportation that picked students up from their secular schools and brought them to Temple Beth Shalom for Mayim and Mayim Tamid. Mayim Tamid's now almost 100 students have come to think of Temple Beth Shalom as a second Jewish home.

There were three main missteps, according to Happel, that were taken in the creation of Mayim. The first was that the development of Mayim meant that Temple Beth Shalom was employing full time teachers for the first time, but no one had experience managing full time teachers nor knew how much time they needed for things like lesson planning, especially with

the introduction of project based learning at Temple Beth Shalom. The full time teaching model was employed because they were now teaching five days a week. In order to support them, Happel eventually hired a curriculum coach to come in to support the teachers. Happel said that were she to be involved in a change process like that again, whether as a consultant or a leader, she would make sure that teacher support was there from the beginning.

The second was that Mayim was so focused on its new curriculum that it stopped living in Jewish time. Holidays passed without mention. Once that was recognized, it was still difficult to determine how to both follow student interest with experiential education and work some recognition and themes of Jewish holidays into the learning.

The third was difficulty communicating with parents. Parents wanted to know about their childrens' educational experiences, especially because the project based learning model was new to them. Because the students themselves were not the best at communicating what they learned to their parents, Mayim and Mayim Tamid have utilized several new ways to communicate with parents: having teachers keep a blog for parents to check, texting, and emailing summaries and photos of their children the day after class. They have also added reflection tools for the students so that they have some preparation for answering their parents' eager questions, which Happel identified as being very successful.

What Happel is most proud of in Mayim Tamid is the relationships formed between the students, families, and teachers. The students have almost as much time per week in Mayim Tamid as they do in their secular schools, especially the ones who come five days a week. Parents have also come to see the teachers as partners in raising and teaching their children.

That does not mean that Mayim and Mayim Tamid are without challenges. When coming after school the students are tired and hungry, meaning that they need time to have a mini meal.

Many students also begin behaving at Temple Beth Shalom the way they would at home, playing and fighting with their classmates as they would with siblings, and melting down while at the program. Happel said that she is not upset by this behavior, challenging though it may be, because it demonstrates how safe the students feel there. Another challenge Happel is facing is that the program has already run out of space in their relatively recently built school building, which creates numerous complications for how they run the programs.

Happel spoke about how the families feel about Mayim and Mayim Tamid, saying that they're very bought in, especially for Mayim Tamid. The majority of families choose Mayim because they're looking for a Jewish learning program in a synagogue, while the main reasons families choose Mayim Tamid is for the extra childcare time or to try and keep their cohort from Temple Beth Shalom's preschool together. It is not until later, in both cases, that families get invested in the experiential education and Jewish learning components.

Happel believes that she faces the enduring dilemma between Jewish literacy and student engagement frequently, but in most moments prioritizes student engagement. She views engagement as the hook into literacy, saying that it is important to focus on content that is engaging for students, especially younger students, and that over time, if they have become invested, the literacy will follow. She certainly felt confident that students who continue to study at Temple Beth Shalom all the way through 12th grade will be highly literate Jews. She mentioned that one of the more common complaints from parents whose children did not return after Bet Mitzvah is that their Jewish literacy is not where the parents would like it to be, especially around topics like antisemitism and the Holocaust.

Happel also spoke about how her understanding and approach to literacy has changed over the years. With the internet at most of her student's fingertips, she said that her goal in

Jewish education is to help her students fall in love with Judaism, see how it is relevant in their life, and how it can bring meaning to their life. She prioritizes her students feeling comfortable in Jewish spaces and turning to Judaism for support and celebration over covering any specific topic.

Hired to Bring Change

Marisa Kaiser is the Senior Director of Learning and Engagement at Temple Sinai in Atlanta, Georgia. She was hired to bring change to their religious school, although no one knew what change was needed.

She began a change process at Temple Sinai, which eventually developed Noar. In that process she drew on a visioning committee made of congregants, parents, one of the rabbis, as well as other stakeholders like teachers, the board, the staff, and the students. She held roundtables to get feedback, with one essential question being “what is our vision for lifelong learning?”

There were several needs that this change had to address. There had been a culture of learning “being over here in religious school, and fun being over there in the youth program.” In other words, the Jewish literacy and student engagement were separated, and needed to be infused together.

However, the engagement side was not solely focused on students. Most parents dropped their children off at the beginning of the day, and did not even step foot into the building. Kaiser needed a way to draw parents into the school, and make them partners in their children’s learning, because she valued parents as partners in Jewish education. Bringing them in as part of the change process helped with that, and over time many parents became even more involved, going so far as to correct others, including the rabbi, if they referred to it as something other than Noar.

Kaiser felt very strongly about changing both the name and the experience attached to that name. She thought that it would be easier for students and parents to leave behind their own baggage if they were going to Noar, not religious school, Sunday school, nor Hebrew school. She

was aware of the attitude that some parents have of “I had to go, so you have to go too,” and wanted to eliminate that attitude, if not in the parents, at least in their children.

She was transparent with the congregation about the whole process of change, and many people doubted that changing the name to Noar would do anything useful. However, when it was finally time to introduce the pilot program to one class for six weeks, which included Kaiser’s own child, the new name proved important. The students immediately adopted it, seeing Noar as an entirely new experience. Kaiser experienced this both with her educator and parent hat on, listening to her child speak excitedly about ‘Noar.’ Within a few months the new name had caught on, changing the narrative of the experience of Jewish learning at Temple Sinai, associating it with something positive.

Kaiser and the other stakeholders spent a lot of time thinking about what experience they wanted to create. They drew inspiration from places like URJ Six Points Sci-Tech Academy, and other camps where they saw students excited to learn. They decided on four key points from this research for Noar.

- Student personal choice,
- relationships at the center of learning,
- active learning,
- and Jewish framing.

What resulted was an experiential education model in which students could connect all their learning to Judaism.

Another innovation that Kaiser brought to Noar was Hebrew Chavurah. Before Noar, Hebrew was taught on Sunday mornings along with Judaics, as is done in most Jewish supplementary schools. However, it quickly became clear that there was too little time on

Sunday mornings for both the experiential education model for Judaics and Hebrew. Rather than extend the hours of the sessions, Kaiser decided to add Hebrew after school on weekdays in small groups, and have it located at host houses in various neighborhoods across Atlanta. This would mean families would also not have to contend with traffic. Each Hebrew Chavurah is located at a central point for the students of Noar who live nearby, and has proven to be a successful way to dedicate time for students to learn Hebrew.

Kaiser also talked about how Noar has changed since the start of the pandemic. She said that the content has been lacking somewhat, because of the intense focus many schools, including Noar, put on student engagement during lockdown. Now that we are some distance away from that, Kaiser said that it was time to reevaluate the balance in Noar between Jewish literacy and student engagement, in favor of having more or deeper content.

The biggest challenge Kaiser has had with Noar is staffing, both at the beginning and now. When Noar first started, finding the right teachers and educators for the new model was difficult. Many of the previous teachers were not trained in experiential education, which Kaiser has addressed through hiring teachers who were already trained, and training the ones who were not. Even now that difficulty persists, with relatively high turnover in staff. Nevertheless, Kaiser still believes that quality control is important for Noar to work, because “if you don’t have people who know how to manage engagement and content, then what are you doing?”

However, needing to reevaluate part of Noar does not mean Kaiser is not proud of Noar. It is, at this point, it is fully supported in the Temple Sinai community. What’s more, she mentioned that parents and students love it, some even going on to try and sell it to other families, talking about how different it is.

Kaiser also spoke about how important it is for an educational leader to know the culture they are working in, what is possible; what can be changed; and what would be too great a change. She noted that it is important to have a clear vision of where to go, and to make sure that you bring stakeholders along, not kicking and screaming, but on board and invested. There are factors outside of our control, like supplementary education hours being limited to after school and weekends; and the busy schedules of families. But most families want a way to do it all, not to have to pick and choose, and the secret is to make the change align with that desire.

Building a School from the Ground Up

Beverly Socher-Lerner is the Executive Director and Founder of Makom Community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They had spent the previous twelve years, before Makom, running congregational schools in Maryland and New Jersey, being hired specifically to create different “wacky” educational programming, and their ideas were embraced up to a point. However, each congregation eventually arrived at a place with Socher-Lerner that was further away from what they were comfortable with, like changing when during the week their school was in session away from Sunday mornings. As the years passed Socher-Lerner became more and more curious about what they could do without that limitation.

In preparation for building their own supplementary Jewish educational program, they began speaking with people in the wider Philadelphia Jewish community. They set up coffee meetings to interview parents, grandparents, teachers, and other stakeholders in Jewish education to understand more about what worked, what did not work, and what kind of experiences people truly wanted. By the end, they had interviewed approximately one hundred fifty people, with three themes surfacing:

1. Many people had challenging and abrasive experiences with Jewish communities as young adults or children.
2. Despite that experience, parents still wanted their children to have a Jewish education, but would rather opt for no Jewish education than a bad experience.
3. Many of the parents, as a result of their work schedules, needed some kind of after school child care for their children.

With those points in mind, Socher-Lerner decided to create a Jewish supplemental school that met after the normal school day for those families they had interviewed and others in the Philadelphia Jewish community, and they named it Makom Community.

They are so proud of their learners at Makom. They spoke about how the students love the high quality Jewish education they are getting, as well as the relationships the students develop with each other, their teachers, and the Jewish content. They said that the students can encounter a Jewish text, ask big questions about it, empathize with the text and the other learners, and apply it to their own lives, even with the parts of Jewish text that display things like sexism.

There are two main challenges Socher-Lerner has encountered since the program was developed. First, they talked about their struggle to open additional sites for Makom. Before the pandemic, many families from other parts of Philadelphia had contacted them asking for additional locations of Makom closer to their homes. For these families the geographical distance between where they lived and Makom served as a prohibiting factor. Socher-Lerner responded to these requests. The first of what was going to be a series of satellite sites was supposed to open in the fall of 2020, but got delayed, opening in the fall of 2021, because of the pandemic. Socher-Lerner was hoping that they could bring the structure and curriculum to these other sites, and then perhaps even be able to develop a version that could apply to congregational settings. However, after two years, there were too many logistical, staffing, and administration problems at the second site, so Makom downsized back to just one. Socher-Lerner still wants to meet that need though, so they are planning to move Makom to a larger and more central location in Philadelphia starting fall 2024.

The second challenge they faced was financial. Socher-Lerner explained that they have had trouble finding funding to make Makom's price more accessible to more families, in and beyond Philadelphia. They feel a tension between keeping enough income to pay their faculty

and staff fairly, and lowering the cost so that more people can afford to attend. They know the best way to do both is with additional sources of funding, and are in the process of securing it.

Socher-Lerner also said that they had struggled with balancing Jewish literacy and engagement at the congregations they worked at before starting Makom, but that because they built Makom from the ground up they proactively addressed the tension between these two values. Makom creates a cycle where engagement leads to literacy which leads to more engagement which leads to deeper literacy, and so on. The reason they think that cycle exists, is because the learning goals are less about factual information, and more about getting the students to think and make their own connections between the Jewish content and their own lives, and when they build those connections they want to learn more.

Families enrolled think Makom is amazing. Socher-Lerner said that the parents of their students love Makom, and that's not just an impression, they have data from mid-year and year-end surveys to back it up. They added that the vast majority of parents, over 90%, say that they feel like they are part of a "Jewish parenting community" because of Makom. Parents also say that they can see the excitement their children get from learning at Makom, which indicates that the students are just as happy with Makom as their parents are.

Finally, they said that the best way to build an alternative program like Makom is to invest in relationships with people, and design it with those humans at the center. They explained that some people might look at what you are trying to build, and say that no one will fund it or want it, but that if you understand what the people need from a school, you can make it meet those needs. You may have to play with staffing structure, pay, benefits, preparation time, schedule, location, or any other number of factors, but it is worth doing so, because of the high quality experiences and community it will create.

Analysis of Leading Change

There were several themes that arose out of the conversations I had with Rabbi Eric Rosenstein, Rachel Happel, Marisa Kaiser, and Beverly Socher-Lerner. They are:

- The Name Matters, how symbolic meaning of a name can change associations;
- Understanding the Needs of the Community, structurally meeting the needs of the community and learners;
- Readiness for Change, political support from the community;
- Staffing, Training, and Teacher support, having educators who are invested in the ideologies and have facility with the methodologies being used;
- Engagement as the Hook for Literacy.

The Name Matters

I interviewed educational leaders from four different supplemental Jewish education programs. And although they are all different from each other, each one had a specific name. This strikes me as unusual in and of itself, as, in my experience, many supplemental Jewish education programs have no name, instead being referred to as “religious school,” “Sunday school,” or “Hebrew school.” Does only changing what something is called make a difference if there is no substantive change in other factors such as the model, the curriculum, and the pedagogy? According to Litman (2017), no. However, as Marisa Kaiser said, changing the name combined with changing the structure and content can remove previous negative associations with Jewish educational experiences, leaving a clean slate for the newly named school. Symbolically, this becomes a shorthand for how the new school is different from other supplemental Jewish educational options.

Kaiser stated it explicitly, but for the others I am not sure if this line of thinking was part of the intention of their program’s name. However, the pattern of success for these supplemental Jewish education programs with non-interchangeable names indicates that a name change can make a difference if there is significant structural change to go with it.

Needs of the Community

Even though each program has a different structure, parents largely responded positively because each model was suited to the specific needs of that community. Moreover, each met the structural needs of their families that was determined by processing stakeholder input. This means that models cannot be easily transplanted because each is specifically matched for its own community. Rachel Happel even said as much, stating that her school “cannot, and should not, be copied over into another community.” It was the change process she led to create Mayim Tamid that could be transferable.

Camp Sababa was born out of a need for an alternative schedule for families that could not come to the religious school, but still wanted a Jewish education for their children. And that is one of the main pieces of positive feedback: Sababa fits families' time constraints and provides excellent Jewish education. It meets the needs of the community at Temple Judea.

While creating what would become Mayim and Mayim Tamid, parents at Temple Beth Shalom were asked “why are you seeking a Jewish education for your child?” The answers to that question are what led to Mayim being built as it was. What’s more, further innovation would happen a few years later as parents and students wanted more time afterschool at Mayim,. By listening to the new needs of the community, Mayim Tamid was built, with the express purpose of allowing students to come more than once a week. Since both sets of needs still exist at Temple Beth Shalom, so do both kindergarten through fourth grade programs.

Like Mayim, Noar had a key question behind its conception: “what is our vision for lifelong learning?” ‘Our vision.’ It was not my vision, not their vision, but ours, our community’s vision. Marisa Kaiser, who led the change process to build Noar at Temple Sinai, identified this

as the key question because of how important it is for an educational leader to know the culture they are working in. A school should be designed based on that community.

Makom, unlike the others, was not built to be part of a congregation. Beverly Socher-Lerner, the founder of Makom, spoke with over one hundred fifty people and discovered that they wanted high quality Jewish education for their children, and needed childcare. They created an after school Jewish education program, to which people flocked, even requesting satellite campuses. It was built by investing in relationships with people, and designing it with those humans at the center.

The structure of a supplemental Jewish school has a significant impact on its outcomes, especially when that structure is based on the needs of the community. One of the key leadership implications of this casebook is that in order for a program to be successful, it must meet the needs of the community. These needs can only be determined by gathering and analyzing input from stakeholders.

Readiness for Change

In Bolman and Deal's (2017) political frame, understanding the wishes and motivation of the stakeholders is important. Most of the leaders in these cases address who was involved in their change process or the way in which competing interests showed up. Additionally, they each had to confront their own attitudes and experiences in order to be ready to make that change. And, as they moved through the creation and implementation of these new models, they had to confront and work through additional challenges, but that work enabled them to achieve positive and long-lasting results.

Camp Sababa was made for the families who needed a different schedule in order to give their children a Jewish educational experience. It was also an addition to Temple Judea's religious school, not a replacement, meaning that it did not create an issue for the families for whom the religious school was working. In fact, it has since grown even more popular, with many of the religious school students also being Sababa campers..

Like Sababa, Mayim Tamid was built as an additional option, not a replacement. There were families at Temple Beth Shalom who wanted to be able to go to Mayim more often, and from that input Rachel Happel made Mayim Tamid. No one was forced to enroll in it, rather she gave the choice to those who were either uninterested in a more frequent program or were uncomfortable with the risk of being in a new program. Even though Mayim, at that point, was still young, the dissatisfaction with it on the part of some families allowed for Mayim Tamid to be created. When making change, dissatisfaction is one of the pieces that makes the perceived cost of change worth paying (Aron, 2000). Part of the internal political support for a new program comes from people understanding that the current options are insufficient or

undesirable. At Temple Beth Shalom, it was proving that Mayim was insufficient, so Happel capitalized on that organic dissatisfaction and desire for more into Mayim Tamid.

Marisa Kaiser was hired by Temple Sinai to lead the change process for their religious school. By definition that demonstrates that the community was dissatisfied with their current school and in support of change. Although that meant she did not have to build dissatisfaction with what already existed, Kaiser still had to painstakingly communicate with stakeholders in order to get them on board with Noar.

Makom is a story of Beverly Socher-Lerner, not a congregation, being ready for change. They had spent a dozen years leading congregational schools beforehand. It took all that time for them to become ready to make Makom, for them to become curious about what they could create outside of a congregation. And, it took talking to people over coffee to determine what people's wants and needs were that they could design Makom to creatively address.

It does not just matter if a school is designed structurally for the community it serves, but that the community must also be in support of it. Moreover, that support will be needed in order to begin building one. Utilizing the political frame, working with people to gather support and buy-in, is an essential leadership strategy to make these excellent and tailored Jewish educational experiences.

Staffing, Training, and Teacher Support

Another throughline in the interviews was the practical, logistical, messy side of change: human resources. The needs and realities of teachers, counselors, and other staff who provide quality learning for students must be supported, and their skills and attitudes should be aligned with the organization's needs and goals.

At Camp Sababa, it is about the teen counselors. The camp needs to be run smoothly and competently according to Sababa's values and goals. They need to meet these expectations, but on the other hand, teenage counselors need to be able to make mistakes so they can learn, grow, and build their own leadership skills. Rabbi Eric Rosenstein said that he wants to give them enough leeway that they can learn, but not so much that they spin out of control, "holding them to account kindly, gently, but with boundaries." These teens are already invested in Sababa, but they also need support in order to do well as counselors.

Rachel Happel even went so far as to identify this point as a misstep when creating Mayim. When the teaching role switched from being part time to full time, the staff at Temple Beth Shalom did not have the knowledge or experience to be able to manage them, creating a friction between Mayim and its teachers. The leadership had to determine factors like how much planning time teachers needed. In the end, they hired a curriculum coach to come and support the teachers, support that Rachel Happel said she would make sure was there from the beginning if she were to do it again.

Marisa Kaiser said very similar things about staffing, but added in the difficulty of finding the appropriate teachers. She needed teachers who would support and had the skills to be part of Noar's experiential education model, and that kind of staff was not easy to come by.

Nevertheless, she emphasized that the quality of teachers is critical for Noar, and therefore she put in the effort to find and hire those teachers, and train others to be those teachers as well.

Beverly Socher-Lerner added another dimension: having enough money to pay teachers and other staff fairly, while also keeping the cost of the school affordable, both of which are values they hold. Even with the human resources they need for Makom, they still strive for improvement. This is something they are still struggling with given the financial realities of running an entrepreneurial program.

It is critical for the functioning of any educational program, no matter the content, curricula, or pedagogies, to have educators who can facilitate learning. Even the best designed experience will fail if there is no one to implement it, and educational leaders can not do it alone. An educational leader must find or train teachers who are invested in and committed to the school, the learners, and the community, and build a support system for them in the process of making change.

Engagement as the Hook for Literacy

Rabbi Eric Rosenstein initially told me that engagement and literacy can be at odds with each other, but he wants to “help them [his students and campers] find their hook into the learning, the thing that engages them in the tradition, whether that be fun, friends, or anything else.” When students are engaged, through any means, they are more ready to learn.

Rachel Happel encounters the enduring dilemma between literacy and engagement frequently in the education programs at Temple Beth Shalom. She leans towards student engagement more often than not. She values Jewish literacy, but because she believes that the way for students to become literate is for them to stay engaged for a long time. For her that timeline is twelfth grade, not Bet Mitzvah, making it even more important for the students to be engaged enough to choose to come back and learn more.

At Temple Sinai, before Noar, Jewish literacy and student engagement had been fully separated, into a religious school and youth program respectively. One of Noar’s great innovations was to fuse them together. And to do that they took inspiration from educational programs where learning was exciting.

Beverly Socher-Lerner said something similar about Makom. They had seen the enduring dilemma at the previous places they had worked, and so it was forefront in their mind as they made Makom. They did manage it by “creating a cycle where engagement leads to literacy” and back again, over and over, spiraling up as positive reinforcement for each other.

When I picked the sites for my casebook, I did so with an assumption that each was made to manage the tension between Jewish literacy and student engagement in a win-win way, using each to improve the other. Each interviewee, whether they were talking about their school or their own personal beliefs, said some version of the same words: that engagement should be used

as the hook by which one gets the opportunity to grow literacy, and that when done well that literacy becomes the hook for further engagement. They all also had high levels of student and family satisfaction, often with the word “love” involved in the description, suggesting that this idea is likely the best practice for increasing both student engagement and Jewish literacy, a third way. Educational leaders need to balance these values in this way, so that they will feed back into each other.

An enduring dilemma cannot be solved, yet it seems that these four educational leaders believe they have solved it. After reflecting on my conversations with them, ruminating on the nature of an enduring dilemma, and recognizing that these four examples are not the sum total of supplemental Jewish educational experiences, I have realized that Jewish literacy and student engagement are actually in tension, and these four educational leaders have not solved it. Rather, what they have done is managed it so well in a long term, but not permanent, way that it has shifted into the background. Although this shows that it is possible to keep it relatively dormant for long periods of time, it is important for educational leaders to recognize and tend to it, even in the background.

Credo Statement

One question I had going into this was: why has it been so long since a major overhaul in Jewish supplemental education, despite calls for one for over a century (Stern, 2004)? Well, perhaps because there is no one way that will fit every community. The better alternative, developing something uniquely suited to your community, is a long hard process that never ends. After all, communities are not static, and as people leave and arrive the community changes, as does what they need. So even if you make something wonderful to fit the needs of today, it will not last forever, and the possibility of having to rebuild a Jewish educational program repeatedly feels incredibly daunting. And yet, as these four sites exemplify, it is also entirely worth the effort.

But what does all this mean? How do these interviews translate into creating change at your own institution, or building an independent one like Beverly Socher-Lerner did with Makom Community? How do you, as the leader, go out and make a program where engagement is the hook for literacy, and that literacy is the hook for more engagement?

Well, first and foremost, you need to listen. In order to create something that is better for your community, you must understand the environment and the people: what they want, why they want it, and how that does and does not align with what already exists. It is important to talk to stakeholders, teachers, parents, madrikhot, students, board members, and so on. But it is not sufficient to merely try and appease people, as my teacher Miriam Heller Stern would say, “you need to be able to hear that people want faster horses, and from that invent the car.” The car, in this case, will be the school you are trying to create, your vision of what could be, based on their needs and your own knowledge of educational practices, your model of best fit.

However, knowing where you are going is only one step of the process, you also have to bring people there with you. This task is not necessarily the second step. Marisa Kaiser was hired

after Temple Beth Shalom decided they wanted change. It is not necessarily difficult but it is necessary: Mayim Tamid and Sababa were created because people were already advocating for something different. Even Makom, created outside a congregation, needed people to be bought into the idea. One great way to get people on board is to create dissatisfaction with what is. If leaders do not understand that the current school does not meet its own goals, or why it does not meet its own goals, or that its goals are not reflective of the community, then why would they bother with the effort of change? You will need to be able to demonstrate the relevant discrepancies and deficiencies, possibly over a long period of time, so that people will see the result as being worth the effort.

Once you know what you are working towards, and your community is ready to go there with you, all that is left is to do it, and to be ready to adjust it as needed, or even discard it, as your community changes in the future.

Yet, one question remains, how far is too far? This is not a goal you can accomplish, or a task you can complete, it is a question you need to ask yourself. What are you unwilling to let go of, or to embrace? Is there something, a pedagogy, schedule, content, or structure that is too fundamental to Jewish supplementary education to get rid of? Or too misaligned to try? You do have boundaries for this, and although they may change, they are important to be aware of, especially because your community will have them too. And you will need to be able to know when to live in their lines, and when to leave.

I believe it is important to meet with the stakeholders of my future community, to analyze what the school does well and poorly, determine their needs and how best to meet them. Leaders must get people on board with their vision. I want to chart the boundaries of the community in which I work and challenge myself to build a model that fits. This is what leaders should do and

I look forward to it. This is what will allow us to be radical in building a better future for the Jewish community.

Bibliography

- Aron, I. (2000). "Honoring the past while anticipating the future: Balancing tradition and change." *The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life*. Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont.
- Bolman, L., Deal, T. (2017). *Reframing Organizations* (6th edition). Jossey Bass.
DOI:10.1002/9781119281856
- Litman, L. (2017). "What really matters in synagogue education: A comparative case study of a conventional school and an alternative program." *Journal of Jewish Education* 83:4, 249-279. DOI: 10.1080/15244113.2017.1378564
- Makom Community. (2024). *Jewish Enrichment Program: Daily, High Quality Jewish Enrichment in Center City*. Makom Community.
<https://makomcommunity.org/afterschool-enrichment/>
- Mayim Overview*. Temple Beth Shalom. <https://www.tbslearning.org/overview>
- Mayim Tamid*. Temple Beth Shalom. <https://www.tbslearning.org/mayim-tamid>
- Noar. (2023). *Youth Programs 2023-2024*. Shulcloud.
<https://images.shulcloud.com/1203/uploads/Center-for-Learning-and-Engagement/Noar/2023-2024-Registration/YouthTeenBrochure23.pdf>
- Noar. (2024). *Noar Hebrew*. Temple Sinai. <https://www.temple sinaiatlanta.org/noar-hebrew.html>
- Shorashim Overview*. Temple Beth Shalom. <https://www.tbslearning.org/shorashim-overview>
- Stern, M. H. (2004) "A dream not quite come true: Reassessing the Benderly era in Jewish education." *Journal of Jewish Education* 70(3), 16-26. DOI: 10.1080/0021624040700304
- Temple Judea. (2024). *Camp Sababa*. Temple Judea: A Reform Jewish Community.
<https://templejudea.com/learn/camp-sababa/what-is-sababa/>

<https://templejudea.com/learn/camp-sababa/>

ter Kuile, C. (2020) *The power of ritual: Turning everyday activities into soulful practices*.

Harper Collins.

Artifacts

Interview Questions

1. How did you arrive at this model for your program?
 - a. Who else did you rely on and consult to reach this model?
 - b. What was the need/pain/challenge you were trying to address?
 - c. Were there any missteps you took along the way, or anything you'd do differently if you were to do it again? Maybe something you've even since addressed?
2. What are you most proud of in how you have structured your program, and what is its most significant challenge?
3. How do you think families feel about the structure and goals of your program?
 - a. (For Sababa and Mayim only) How do families typically decide which program to enroll in?
4. I am investigating the values of Jewish literacy, by which I mean Jewish values, Hebrew, Jewish life skills, Israel, and anything else you want your students to know, and student engagement. Can you think of a situation in which you, as the educational leader, had to manage a conflict between these two values? What was the situation and how did you handle it?
5. Are these two values you hold as important in your leadership? What advice would you give an emerging leader, like me, who is considering how innovative programs might have a unique way of managing the tension between these two values?
6. Is there anything else you want to add based on our conversation today?

Camp Sababa is a new way to think about Jewish learning.

From Website: <https://templejudea.com/learn/camp-sababa/>

Some of our families enroll in Sababa INSTEAD of traditional religious school, since participation in Sababa fulfills Temple Judea's learning requirement for students working toward b'nei mitzvah. Others enroll their children in BOTH, since religious school and Sababa are two distinct programs with little overlap, and families who enroll in both enjoy a tuition discount. Still others take an "A LA CARTE" approach, enrolling their children in our traditional religious school program, and adding just one or two weeks of Sababa, so they don't miss out on the fun. However you choose to take advantage of this incredible program - you'll soon learn...

SABABA MEANS COOL!

At Camp Sababa, Campers:

- Build community & create friendships.
- Engage with Jewish music, prayer, and culture every day.
- Are in the care of experienced camp educators and staff members who make programming memorable and meaningful.
- Explore creative arts through activities like art, music, dance, and drama.
- Get plenty of fresh air and physical activity - including on-campus swimming and krav maga.
- Learn by creating, tasting, experimenting, and exploring.

Meet our Sababa Campers! (By Incoming Grade)

Dubbim! (The Bears) -- Kindergarten

Kofim! (The Monkeys) -- 1st Grade

Dagim! (The Fishes) -- 2nd-3rd Grade

Tziporim! (The Birds) -- 4th-6th Grade

Arayot! (The Lions) -- 7th Grade

Dates for 2024 - 2025

- Summer Dates, Week 1: July 22 - July 26, 9am - 4pm
- Summer Dates, Week 2: July 29- August 2, 9am - 4pm
- Winter Dates: December 23 - 27, 9am - 4pm (No camp December 25. Optional sleepover to December 28).
 - Sababa Saturdays: TBD

MAYIM OVERVIEW

From Website: <https://www.tbslearning.org/overview>

Mayim is our original, signature elementary learning program (grades K-4) at Temple Beth Shalom. Mayim offers an experiential and project-based learning curriculum. It is a wonderful way for children to experience meaningful Jewish learning as they build relationships in our TBS community. There is rich learning that happens each year, and learning builds from one year to the next. Children attend Mayim once a week. There are typically 10-12 children per group, with two groups at each age level meeting on the same day.

WHY IS THE K-4 LEARNING PROGRAM AT TBS CALLED MAYIM?

"Water is likened to Torah." (*Talmud - Bava Kama 82a*)

Mayim is the Hebrew word for water. In so many ways we see connections between water and the learning settings that we have created for our elementary school-aged children and their families:

- **Water has depth**, and our foremost goals for the *Mayim* program are to create depth of relationships and of learning for our children and families.
- **Water flows freely and easily**, and we seek to create the smoothest transitions possible from year to year, from our youngest preschool students through our oldest teens.
- **Water allows for growth in our world**, and we want our students and their families to grow through ever-richer Jewish lives and experiences.
- **Water takes on many forms** just as our children vary significantly in their learning styles and needs, and we seek to create nurturing learning environments for all who are able to participate.
- **Water allows us to float**, and this is the definition of resilience - the ability to keep one's head up even through turbulent times and circumstances. Temple Beth Shalom is such a "life-preserver" for our children and adults alike.
- **Water envelops us when we are in it**, just as our Jewish learning should inform all of our lives, both in and out of the synagogue.

- **Water produces reflections in which we can see ourselves**, just as we strive to see ourselves in the stories and values of Jewish tradition.
- **Water can be tranquil and peaceful**, just as Temple Beth Shalom serves as an oasis for our families - a place to seek sanctuary from the hectic pace of daily life.
- **Water builds independence as children learn to swim in it**, and our learning programs do the same, allowing children to take age-appropriate risks as they mature.
- Water is fun and engaging for the whole family, just as our learning programs need to be.

MAYIM TAMID

From Website: <https://www.tbslearning.org/mayim-tamid>

Mayim Tamid ("Mayim Always") is a multi-day program for children in grades K-4, which combines the after school care found in many extended day programs with the rich Jewish learning and community building found in our Mayim program. Each day, children enjoy playground time, homework time, healthy snack, Hebrew and Jewish learning, prayer and song, and free play. Since it includes an active Jewish learning component, it "counts" as "Hebrew school."

In Mayim Tamid, children experience Jewish life and cycles in real time, learning, celebrating and playing together in an environment that nurtures each child on their individual path. Children build deep relationships with their faculty, TBS rabbis and professional staff, and each other in a setting that helps children feel like the temple is their second home. Hebrew language learning is an integral part of the Mayim Tamid experience, as children build familiarity with Hebrew letters, vowels, words, and simple conversations.

MAYIM TAMID

Mayim is the Hebrew word for water.

Tamid is Hebrew for always, continual, or eternal. The word was first used in the Torah to refer to the daily offerings (olat tamid) of our Biblical ancestors, and it is still used today to refer to the eternal light (neir tamid) that hangs above the ark in Jewish sanctuaries. Since the children in Mayim Tamid attend with more frequency than the

children in our flagship Mayim program, we added this word to signify their more perpetual presence.

Mayim

Grades K-1 (Weekdays)

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm - Arrival Activities

3:15 pm - 3:30 pm - Kibbud

3:30 pm - 3:45 pm - Mifgash Meeting

3:45 pm - 4:00 pm - Hafsakah

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Explorations

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm - T'filah

Grades K-1 (Sundays)

9:00 am - 9:15 pm - Mifgash Meeting

9:15 am - 10:15 am - Explorations

10:15 am - 10:30 am - Hafsakah

10:30 am - 11:00 am - T'filah

Grades 2-4 (Weekdays)

3:00 pm-3:15 pm - Arrival Activities

3:15 pm-3:30 pm - Kibbud

3:30 pm-3:45 pm - Mifgash Meeting

3:45 pm-4:00 pm - Hafsakah

4:00 pm-5:00 pm - Explorations

5:00 pm-5:30 pm - T'filah

5:30 pm-6:15 pm - Hebrew Instruction (4th Grade)

Grades 2-4 (Sundays)

9:00 am-9:15 pm - Mifgash Meeting

9:15 am-10:15 am - Explorations

10:15 am -10:30 am - Hafsakah

10:30 am-11:00 am - T'filah

11:00 am-11:45 am - Hebrew Instruction (4th Grade)

Mayim Tamid

Weekly Schedule

Open Monday through Friday

Children may enroll for 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week

Hours

2:45 pm - 5:30 pm (Monday-Friday)

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm (Monday-Thursday) - optional extended day “moadon” (lounge)

12:15 pm - 3:00 pm (Wednesday) - extended programming on NPS early release days

Sample Daily Schedule

3:00 pm Buses arrive from Broadmeadow, Eliot, Mitchell, and Sunita Williams

3:00 pm Flex Time (choice time, playground, homework)

3:20 pm Bus arrives from Newman

3:30 pm Kibbud (Snack) and Community Building

4:00 pm Hafsakah (Recess) or Explorations (Jewish Learning)

5:00 pm T’filah (Prayer & Song)

5:30 pm Optional Moadon (lounge) with flexible pick-up

**We ask that children stay until 5:30 pm at least one day per week and a second day until 5:00 pm in order to get the full learning experience. For additional days, 4:00 pm, 5:00 pm, and 5:30 pm pick-up is available. Transportation from Needham Public schools is included in the tuition. Early Release days, Moadon extended care and Vacation day coverage is available at an additional cost.*

Fridays

Fridays in Mayim Tamid include additional weekly rituals. Each child has an opportunity to braid an individual challah to be baked at TBS and taken home at dismissal. Friday kibbud (snack) includes a fresh challah roll and grape juice. During Friday T’filah, the children participate in lighting Shabbat candles and in Kiddush, and Shabbat music is included.

The Mayim Tamid children enjoy the special atmosphere of Fridays at TBS. Attending on Fridays allows them to be a part of real-time celebration of one of the most cherished holidays of the Jewish year.

RACHEL HAPPEL

Senior Director of Learning and Engagement

Pronouns: She/Her

rhappel@tbsneedham.org

Rachel joined the Temple Beth Shalom team as the Director of Elementary Learning in September 2013, after having served as one of the key educational consultants in the development of the Mayim program for the three preceding years. In July of 2014, Rachel assumed the role of Director of K-12 Learning and oversees all aspects of our children's journey from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Rachel has over twenty years of experience in a variety of settings, working with children of all ages and their families to create rich, engaging, and dynamic learning experiences. Prior to joining TBS, Rachel worked for six years at Brandeis University as the Director of BIMA and Genesis, two immersive summer programs for Jewish high school students. From 2002-2007, Rachel worked at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, where she founded and directed their Havayah Program: a mixed-age, elective-based program for grades 8-12. Rachel received an MA in Jewish Communal Service and an MBA from Brandeis University, as well as a BA from Williams College. She lives in Natick with her husband and two daughters.

Noar

From Website: <https://www.temple Sinaiatlanta.org/noar-sunday.html>

Noar (Youth) Sunday is Temple Sinai's innovative learning experience for students in Grades Pre-K through Grade 6. At Noar, kids experience t'filah (prayer), holidays, Jewish identity and diversity through our pillars of learning:

Authentic Jewish Content Personal Choice Community Building Hands-On Learning

What does a Noar Sunday look like?

Each student is placed into an eidah (unit) based on grade level with its own curricular focus (lifecycle events, Torah stories, Jewish history, etc.). We explore social-emotional spiritual learning through the mensch middot (Jewish values) to help students learn to be active, engaged members of their communities and to be their best selves. We know that students learn best when they have engaging choices, so our students move through rotations including Hebrew, small group learning, community building, t'filah (prayer), and chugim (electives).

A typical Noar Sunday might look like this (sample schedule):

9:15 am-9:45 am: Carpool, community building games, independent activities to help kids transition into Noar

9:45 am-10:00 am: Boker Kehilah (Morning Community Circle)

We build kehillah (community) through different activities and circle games. This is where we introduce each day's learning targets, Jewish life vocabulary, and Hebrew letter of the week. It's our foundation for building strong friendships!

10:00 am-10:30 am Bayit (Home Base)

This is your child's core small group learning time. Building on the kehillah (community), this small group of students will remain consistent throughout the year to reinforce friendships.

Each bayit (home base) experiences Jewish learning through different modalities to engage every type of learner: through games, hands-on projects, visual art, and more!

10:30 am-10:45 am: Hebrew through Movement or Extended Bayit

Students in Pre-K-3rd Grade LOVE Hebrew through Movement: a kinesthetic, conversational Hebrew immersion class led by a native Hebrew speaker each week. Through movement games and challenges, kids embody the foundations of Hebrew learning and get a taste of Noar Hebrew that begins in 4th Grade.

10:45 am-11:30 am: Chugim (electives)

Kids learn best when they feel empowered. Part of each Noar session is made up of elective courses for students to choose from (or different weekly rotations for our younger learners). A chug might focus on sports, art, Israeli cooking, music, gardening, STEM -- you name it!

11:30 am-12:00 pm: T'filah (Prayer)

Each Noar Sunday, students attend a T'filah with our clergy as an eidah (unit). Students learn how to pray as a Jewish and how the prayers relate to what they are learning in bayit and chugim. In Grades 4-6, we focus in on prayers that are learned in Noar Hebrew to experience them in context.

12:00 pm - 12:10 pm: Carpool Questions

Experiential education ends with reflection so each child can process what they learned. It's important to note that through experiential education, students may be learning different

things rather than cold, hard facts. We'll reflect at the end of our session as a group. Then, we ask you to partner with us by asking "Carpool Questions," at pick up (which will be sent as you wait in the carpool line each week). Through this practice, we are able to help each child connect the experience that day to their Jewish education and informally assess their skills -- and it helps to continue the conversation at home!

12:10 pm-12:30 pm: Afternoon Dismissal

For Noar Families: Throughout the year, there will be opportunities to participate in t'filah (prayer) with your children, activities to take home as a family, and we'll update you at the end of each session with carpool questions to continue the conversation at home. There will also be events outside of Sundays to engage with other families in your child's grade level.

Noar students in 4th-6th grade also participate in Noar Hebrew. The goal of our Hebrew program is to expose our students to the Hebrew language and actively engage students in their Hebrew studies. We teach our students basic Hebrew language, decoding and prayer skills while also providing them with a living experience and meaningful connection to the Hebrew language. Students learn prayer-based Hebrew and decoding side-by-side to help them achieve these Jewish life skills. Hebrew takes place 1 hour a week in your neighborhood or at Sinai with options ranging Sunday-Thursday depending on availability. We offer 3 options for Hebrew:

OPTION 1: HEBREW CHAVURAH

Students meet in a chavurah (small group) of 3-6 students weekly Sunday-Thursday for Hebrew

instruction at Temple Sinai after Noar or in homes, community centers or local schools. Students in the Hebrew Chavurah program will be placed into small groups based on grade, location, and Hebrew levels (if possible). Our Hebrew students benefit from having small group instruction, forming connections with peers, and learning from an awesome Jewish educator! Note: Sunday Hebrew is now combined with our regular Hebrew Chavurah.

OPTION 2: ATLANTA CONNECTION (VIRTUAL)

For those interested in virtual Hebrew learning, we have partnered with the Atlanta Hebrew Connection to provide small group learning online. This program is run through the Jewish Federation of Atlanta and ShalomLearning. for more information.

OPTION 3: PRIVATE TUTORING

We offer the option of getting a 1-on-1 private tutor (from the approved tutor list) if neither the Hebrew Chavurah or Virtual Hebrew program works for you. If you are considering this option, we suggest you speak to Marisa Kaiser prior to registering to ensure it will accomplish your goals for your child.

HOW WE WORK

From Website: <https://makomcommunity.org/afterschool-enrichment/>

A Typical Day at Makom Community

We fit Jewish education into the busy lives of urban families. We pick children up Monday through Friday from area elementary schools, on a flexible schedule. They walk or take group travel on SEPTA back to Makom Community at 24th and Washington Ave, for a healthy snack and a whole afternoon of Jewish learning, until parent pickup by 6:00pm. While they are with us, children also have time with friends and mentors and can begin homework or have some much needed downtime with their favorite book.

Makom is NOT Boring

From Anonymous Parent • April 6, 2014

Parents complain all the time about how their kids don't like Hebrew school. They're bored, they're not learning anything, they refuse to go. In 8 years at Makom community, my child has NEVER said any of these things about Makom. He is always eager to go, never bored, always knows he's learning and proud to show what's he's learned. This speaks volumes about Makom staff, the pedagogy, and the ability of this organization to recognize what is working and what is not working in 21st-century supplemental Jewish education and respond to it. No one recognizes the issues and implements change like Makom Community.

Our Innovative Pedagogy- Jewish Placemaking

Jewish Placemaking has a few key goals:

To hear the needs of one another and ourselves and create intentional and experiential learning environments.

To collaborate as one community of kiddos and educators as co-creates of our physical space.

To embrace our *makom* (place) as a safe place where we grow into the people we want to be.

To invite Jewish wisdom into ourselves, our homes, our schools, and our city to shape the world we want to be in.

To embrace families as interpreters of Jewish wisdom, regardless of previous Jewish experience, in building our physical and interpersonal community.

Sample Schedule & Curriculum Overview

3:00-4:00	Arrive: Arrive at Makom Community and Eat Snack
4:00-4:30	TEXTploration: Discovering our Jewish texts
4:30-5:00	Shulchanot Avodah: Project Centers and Project-Based Learning
5:00-5:30	Tefilah: Prayer, Music, and Movement
5:30-6:00	End of Day: Homework and Free Time
5:45	End of Day Travel Groups Leave from Makom Community (End of Day Travel
	Groups are intended for learned who are 4th grade and younger.)
6:00	Pick Up: Last Pickup at Makom Community

TEXTploration

We explore a section of Jewish text in a variety of ways! Often, kids will draw, sculpt, or build what they hear. Sometimes, learners act to bring the text to life or listen to our educators dynamically share the text. We start with an opening activity to anchor the big ideas in the text in our lived experience. Then we engage in both discussion and activities that delve into the questions we take from the text. This helps us understand how we can apply this bit of Jewish wisdom to our lives.

***Shulchanot Avodah* – Project Centers**

We meet learners where they are! We know not every child processes the same way or wants to engage with the same activity. At *Shulchanot Avodah* (project centers) everyone gets to choose how they'd like to play with the text or pursue their Hebrew learning. One child busily collages a self-portrait. Two other learners use natural materials to build representations of scenes from a text. Another child flips from image to image online as they imagine what the flora and fauna might have looked like in an earlier time. Another kid reads aloud for a group from a children's book and leads a discussion on how the story connects back to the text we learned that day. One learner sits quietly on her own practicing Hebrew learning with a matching game or by tracing letters in colorful sand. Educators move from child to child to find out whether they can help with the project that a particular student is working on.

In *Shorashim* (1st-2nd grade) and *Nitzanim* (3rd-5th grade) our students are immersed in Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL projects last the length of one whole unit and conclude in a Family Learning Showcase. Students engage in real world and meaningful projects. They work towards answering a driving question that results in authentic project creation. Through PBL, student inquiry, voice and choice, and reflection come together in a model that then invites families in to carry the learning from Makom to their homes.

***Tefilah*: Prayer, Music, and Movement**

The *Garinim* (K-1st graders) and *Shorashim* (1st-2nd graders) clean up their projects and move to the *Tefilah* space as we sing a *niggun* (wordless tune). The *Nitzanim* (3rd-4th graders) and *Anafim* (5th-7th graders) find their siddurim and get settled in a chair or on the floor. We sing prayers and move with the music—jumping, dancing, and contextualizing the text of prayers through the use of gestures and sign language to provide deeper understanding. Many of the students volunteer to lead parts of the

prayer service, but some do not. Some kids sing along loudly, and others don't sing and instead move their bodies to the prayers or sit in a cozy corner.

***Ivrit*, Hebrew**

Makom Community's pedagogy, Jewish Placemaking, creates an immersive environment where Jewish texts, rituals, and customs are woven into our environment and how we interact with each other. Hebrew, including learning to decode letters and sounds with an eye toward text study and *Tefilah* reading rather than conversation, is part of that environment. Through play, discussion, the dissection of key words in text study, and the joyful, confidence-building *Tefilah* experience, we braid Hebrew learning into Makom learning everyday. *Tefilah* is rooted in communal connection and ancestral connection by singing as a means of engaging with ancient liturgy and developing mindfulness. Kids have a strong sense of ownership of their Jewish environment and build a sense of ownership around the prayers, vying for a turn to lead elements of *Tefilah*. Just as Torah is ours to understand, question, and to find personal meaning in, so is *Tefilah*. As learners discover that *Tefilah* can ground them in their Jewish environment, they will express when they are ready to master prayers. Learners begin to master the aleph-bet in *Shorashim* (1st-2nd grade) and full Hebrew prayers in *Nitzanim* (3rd-4th grade). Each learner constructs their own path toward Hebrew mastery. (Note: Mastery is what we call the process of a learner being able to read, lead, and make personal meaning out of a prayer.)

Beverly Socher-Lerner

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

Beverly is a driven builder of communal Jewish learning spaces. They believe that people can make endless meaning from exploring Jewish wisdom and bringing it into our lives in creative ways. Makom Community invites kids and grownups into learning experiences that do just that. Beverly received a B.A. in Jewish Studies from the University of Maryland then received an M.S.Ed. from the University of Pennsylvania in Jewish Education. Beverly was a fellow at Yeshivat Hadar, received the Covenant Foundation Pomegranate Prize, was a Shalom Hartman Created Equal Fellow, and is a graduate of the Mandel Foundation Executive Leadership Program. After running congregational schools in Maryland and New Jersey, working at Barrack Hebrew Academy, and leading Makom Community, they have developed over 100 curricula for learners of all ages. Beverly is excited to introduce Makom's pedagogy, Jewish Placemaking, to communities around the country and see how that supports each community in growing to live up to their values.