

TABLE 3
ENROLLMENT FIGURES, SAVANNAH, GA., 1953-54, 1954-55

| Grade | Actual 1953-54 | | | Estimated 1954-55 | Actual 1954-55 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | Conservative | Orthodox | Total | | |
| Kindergarten..... | — | 34 | 34 | 40 | 50 |
| Mechina..... | — | — | — | — | 22 |
| 1..... | 18 | 20 | 38 | 42 | 37 |
| 2..... | 23 | 18 | 41 | 38 | 40 ^a |
| 3..... | 11 | 12 | 23 | 41 | 33 ^a |
| 4..... | 1 | 18 | 19 | 23 | 18 |
| 5..... | 6 | 7 | 13 | 19 | 15 |
| 6..... | — | 10 | 10 | 13 | 7 |
| TOTAL ELEMENTARY ^b | 59 | 85 | 144 | 176 | 172 |
| HIGH SCHOOL 1..... | — | 3 | 3 | 7 | 7 |
| TOTAL..... | 59 | 122 | 181 | 223 | 229 |

^a Each broken down into two classes.

^b Mechina, two days a week for six- and seven-year olds; all other grades, four days a week.

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SUMMARY OF JEWISH EDUCATION STUDY IN CLEVELAND, OHIO

AS EARLY as 1950, the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland established a Jewish Education Study Committee to study the administrative and financial operations of the Bureau of Jewish Education and the five communally supported schools—an all day school, a Sunday school, two afternoon Hebrew schools, and a Yiddish cultural school.

The study was delayed for a variety of reasons, but in 1952 the committee completed the task of assembling a considerable amount of data on enrollment, attendance, class size, withdrawals, costs, and similar questions. As it began to assess the meaning of the facts it had unearthed, however, the committee gradually came to the conclusion that the mandate drawn for it was too limited to permit sound judgments about the efficiency of Jewish education in the community. Fundamentally, the question posed to the committee was: "Is the community dollar assigned to Jewish education well spent?" The committee's answer, after careful study, was that a quantitative analysis of costs and administration alone would not provide an adequate answer to the question. Some understanding of the quality of the work in the classroom

was also essential, since the committee found that a school with a low per-child hour cost might nevertheless constitute no educational bargain if the classroom standards were low. Conversely, a school whose comparative costs might seem high could possibly claim with justice that the community was receiving ample return on its investment because of the high level of its accomplishment.

The committee therefore recommended in 1952 an extension of its mandate to provide for a qualitative evaluation of the schools as well as the original fiscal review. The approval of this extension of mandate happily coincided with the launching of the national survey of Jewish education by the commission sponsored by the American Association for Jewish Education (AAJE). The Education Study Committee, feeling that experts from outside the city could most objectively study Cleveland's schools, requested the AAJE to undertake the survey, and quickly accepted the resulting invitation from the AAJE to serve as the pilot city for the first year of the national survey.

Certain mutually approved agreements were made. The Education Study Committee undertook to secure the complete cooperation of all Jewish schools in Cleveland, congregational as well as communal, including unrestricted access to all data. Congregational schools were added because the vast majority of Jewish children received their education there; and no valid assessment of either Bureau of Jewish Education operation or educational effectiveness in the community could be made without their cooperation. In addition, the Jewish Community Federation agreed to enlist community support for the survey and to supply local staff help, to serve as liaison to the national surveyors and to aid in making available the considerable manpower (actually womanpower) needed for so ambitious an undertaking.

On the other hand, the commission undertook to provide the general evaluation requested by Cleveland, and in addition, to suggest answers to some of the specific questions that had been raised: Was there any further need for the community to support a Sunday school system? What should be the extent of community support for the all-day school? Was the continuing existence of two afternoon Hebrew schools—one Orthodox and one general—justified? How could the relation of the Bureau of Jewish Education with the congregational schools be strengthened?

Upon the completion of all necessary arrangements, the intensive period of the study began in March 1953, when the surveyors established quarters in Cleveland for a three-month study of the entire school scene.

Study Process

It is difficult to overstate the extent of the study that followed. All school records—fiscal, enrollment, minutes—were made completely available to the surveyors. Detailed interviews were held with all rabbis, most of the educational directors, and a significant sampling of community leaders. Class observations were held, although it was subsequently agreed that it had been impossible to devote enough time to this aspect of the study.

Questionnaires on their attitudes toward many aspects of school work were given to all students in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and confirmation

grades of every Sunday school (1446 in all) and in the top two grades of the Hebrew schools (328). Ninety-five Hebrew high school children and 300 parents were interviewed on a stratified random sampling basis in order to provide deeper insight into attitudes than can be secured from a written questionnaire. More than 1,200 questionnaires were given to leaders from every section of the community inquiring in detail into their ideas on what contributed to effective Jewish living and what role the school could play in achieving this goal. More than a thousand tests of Jewish information and practices were given to adults, and an equal number of achievement tests in history and Hebrew were administered to students.

So widespread an examination demanded—and received—the full support of the community. Under the direction of the national surveyors, twenty-two trained social workers from various Jewish agencies were pressed into service to conduct the student interviews, and a corps of seventy women volunteers, carefully selected, were trained over the course of a month to prepare them for interviewing parents. The faculties of the various schools were used with a good deal of resourcefulness to insure that questionnaires were not administered by those already known to the student, thus helping to secure frank reactions.

The results of these extensive investigations were compiled on IBM machines, wherever the data made such treatment possible, and the entire corpus of findings was studied by the national surveyors. They then presented their findings and recommendations in two stages—a report on the communal schools in January 1954, and a study of attitudes toward education in January 1955.

To study the surveyors' findings and to formulate appropriate recommendations, a fifty-man Jewish Education Study Committee was appointed, broadly representative of the entire community—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform; lay and professional; rabbis and education directors. The committee began its work on receipt of the first half of the study in January 1954, and completed its work sixteen months and thirty-three meetings later. Meeting at times as a committee of the whole and at times through two subcommittees, it studied each school in turn, in accordance with this procedure: Each school was given full opportunity to react to the surveyors' findings, and the resulting comments were submitted to the surveyors for their further study and reaction. The appropriate subcommittee thereupon formulated tentative recommendations after exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) discussion, and once more the school being studied was invited to formulate its positions in the light of committee thinking. The subcommittee then presented its final recommendations to the full committee which again reviewed all material on the given school. Only then was the final report submitted for action to the Social Agency Committee and the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Community Federation. It was felt by many that this process of review, which also involved reports to the community Delegate Assembly and to the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA's) of many schools, was perhaps as important as specific committee recommendations. Certainly every school was given an unusual opportunity to study its own operation, and many of them made significant improvements during the course of the study.

Findings on the Communal Schools

The remainder of this report will not attempt a complete summary of the Cleveland study, much of which has meaning locally only, but will be limited to findings that have more general meaning. These findings fall into two sections—those relating to the communal schools, and those concerned with attitudes and generalized data concerning Cleveland's Jewish educational system.

COMMUNAL SUNDAY SCHOOL SYSTEM

For more than half a century, the Council of Jewish Women and, more recently, the community as a whole, had supported a communal Sunday school system attended by some 800 children. Sharp questions were raised as to the validity of continuing support of a school providing not much more than an hour a week of instruction. *Did so minimal a program warrant community support? Should not the parents be urged to undertake full congregational responsibility, thus eliminating the need for a communal school? Was there any expanded role the school system could fulfill?*

The committee made a study of parents' reasons for choosing the communal school, and found them a rather formless mixture of motivations. In some cases, the children came from mixed marriages, broken homes, or homes where the hold on Jewish life was tenuous. Certainly, inability to pay congregational membership fees was a factor (it was impossible to determine precisely how great), as was an unwillingness to affiliate formally with congregational life.

After much discussion, the committee felt that total suspension of the school system would undoubtedly deprive a significant number of Jewish children of any kind of Jewish education and, moreover, loyalties to the Sunday school were so strong as to indicate a continuing vigorous function for the agency. On the other hand, it was recognized that the school had to be greatly strengthened to justify continuing existence; certainly Hebrew had to be included in the curriculum for the first time. It was moreover felt that each child in the community should be provided with a living contact with a congregation to avoid any feeling that they were unprivileged or "second class" children.

Accordingly, a compromise was worked out providing for absorption of the children of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades into the congregational Sunday schools, and the doubling of class time and expanding of the curriculum for the remainder of the school. This plan was put into effect in September 1955, and it is as yet too early to assess its effectiveness.

THE ALL-DAY SCHOOL

Community support for the all-day Orthodox school of more than 300 students was greater in Cleveland than any other city in the United States. Although, after considerable controversy, the validity of subsidy for this type of education had been accepted almost a decade before, questions had con-

tinuingly been raised as to whether, in view of the rapid growth of the school, limitations should be placed on the degree of community support. In addition, the committee was asked to determine whether only the Jewish function of the school should be supported or the total operation.

After thorough debate the committee concluded that only the normal budgetary limitations applying to every institution should apply to the all-day school, and no arbitrary limit should be imposed beyond which community support should be suspended. It was also recommended that the entire school program should be supported, and not the Jewish studies alone. Difficulties in disentangling costs of the two intertwined functions partly explained the reason for this decision, but more compelling was committee feeling that once committed to support of the all-day school, the community must be interested in high standards for the entire operation, since neither the Jewish nor the general education could exist in isolation.

AFTERNOON HEBREW SCHOOLS

The community supported two afternoon Hebrew school systems, one of them specifically dedicated to Orthodoxy. In line with the surveyors' report that "fragmentation lies like a blight over Jewish education," considerable thought was given to consolidating the two systems. Numerous reasons were advanced for the merger—more efficient use of teachers, creating branches large enough to facilitate sounder educational procedures, overall community planning, standardizing practices and community subsidy, various fiscal benefits, etc.

Intense opposition was encountered from the Orthodox community, which insisted that any merger would threaten its ideological integrity. In an attempt to accommodate this objection, a complicated formula was worked out, guaranteeing that at least one branch with a specifically Orthodox orientation would be retained, granting the Orthodox community complete authority over the curriculum for any Orthodox-oriented branches, and providing for equal representation on the board of trustees of the new school. Although this compromise had been officially accepted by the federation, Orthodox resistance persisted and the question remained open as to whether the plan would be implemented.

BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Sixteen recommendations, many of them in considerable detail, were made as to the function of the proposed Bureau of Jewish Education. Together they formed a committee blueprint for an ideal bureau operation. The plan called for a board of trustees representative of all community viewpoints relying heavily on two supporting arms—an educational directors' council to act as an educational committee and a coordinating committee, including the chairman of affiliated school committees, to consider administrative questions.

The bureau was asked to set minimum school standards for all aspects of school functioning, to be responsible for programs of experimentation (including development of curriculum centers), to establish a program of standardized testing, to conduct regular class observations, to provide central teach-

ing aids of all kinds, to aid schools in defining sharply their programs and curricula, to inaugurate a standard system of record keeping, and to work out close relationships with group work agencies.

Teacher recruitment and training were considered so crucial that a separate memorandum was written incorporating more than a dozen suggestions in this vital field. These included a system of cadet training, starting with the confirmation class level, cooperating with the Jewish Vocational Service and Hillel Foundation, interesting former public school teachers, and establishing a system of community scholarships.

But more basic to improved functioning of a bureau than any particular recommendation, it was agreed, was the establishing of a feeling of confidence and shared objectives with the various schools, particularly the congregations, that sometimes lived in isolation from the total community. The committee report stated:

The Bureau should not be thought of as an outside supervisory body apart from the various schools, but can work together cooperatively for the purpose of furthering Jewish education. The Bureau should impose or favor no single philosophy of Jewish life, but should serve equally all types of positive education. Its function is to work for the goals mutually desired by the schools and the community, to serve as a channel for disseminating information, encouraging more effective teaching methods, improving teaching standards, and stimulating, guiding, and encouraging cooperative efforts for the betterment of Jewish education.

TUITION PROCEDURES

Much thought was given during the committee process to respective responsibilities of parents and community in underwriting school costs. All agreed that the community should provide an education for children whose parents were financially distressed; but beyond such cases, should parents be asked to bear full per capita costs? This should be the objective, urged some, in line with the growing tendency in all communal services to ask the recipient to pay for what he received. Others stressed in opposition that the community had a unique stake in Jewish education through which it passed on Jewish values to the next generation. Some argued for a completely free Jewish education for all children, comparable to the American public school practice, with the expenses borne totally by the community.

The final resolution again represented a compromise, and was stated in generalized terms since no specific formula for distributing costs could be agreed on:

Parents ought to bear a reasonable share of the cost of Jewish education. Assessing the full per capita cost would make it difficult and in some cases prohibitive for parents to provide a Jewish education for their children. Since the community has a vital stake in keeping as large a number of children within the school as possible, it is suggested that the parents and the community be considered partners in sharing the cost of Jewish education. The schools should realize in fees from parents as much of their costs as possible without depriving any child of the right to a Jewish education.

Community Data and Attitudes

Space permits mention of only the high lights of the vast information revealed in the surveyors' report concerning the total educational undertaking in Cleveland.

In 1953 over 9,000 children (the 1955 estimate was 10,500) were enrolled in all the various schools, congregational and communal. Making allowance for dropouts, notably after confirmation, it seems clear that the overwhelming majority of Jewish children in Cleveland—perhaps in excess of 90 per cent—received some kind of Jewish education. However, the greater majority of these, probably as much as 70 per cent, received only a Sunday school education.

There was a strong tendency, despite some modification in the past decade, for boys to receive the more intensive Jewish education. Three quarters of the students of the three most intensive Jewish schools were boys, whereas girls were slightly in the majority at all levels of the Sunday school system.

Inverse correlations could also be worked out between the degree of intensity of the education and the economic achievements and length of residence in America of the parents. This same tendency for the intensity of Jewish education to lessen with increasing assimilation into American life was reflected in the fact that 87 per cent of the Sunday school teachers, but only 47 per cent of the Hebrew school teachers, were born in the United States. Seriously adding to the teacher shortage problem, commented on above, was this indication that Jewish intensive education seemed still to rest on the momentum of European Jewish life. A further difficulty was revealed in data showing that half the Sunday school teachers had taught for fewer than five years, indicating a rapid rate of turnover and perhaps a lowered degree of professionalization.

A study of the members of the various school boards indicated a high level of attainment in general education (almost all were college graduates, and a high percentage were professional people of high economic standing), but a low level of Jewish educational achievement (two-thirds had only Sunday school education).

Physical facilities rated extremely well; almost all of the children received Jewish education in modern physical plants that challenged favorable comparison with the public schools.

The extensive survey of children's attitudes revealed that 65 per cent of Sunday school students and 77 per cent of Hebrew school students "liked" their Jewish schools. This somewhat surprising showing, however, must be measured against a control question revealing that 95 per cent "liked" their public schools. Sixty per cent of both groups stated that they would continue to attend their Jewish school if they had their own free choice, and only 40 per cent of the Hebrew school students, and 33 per cent of the Sunday school students expressed an intention to continue their schooling on the high school level. Almost all students (94 per cent), however, accepted the need for a Jewish education, although 87 per cent of the Hebrew school students, and 65 per cent of the Sunday school students, claimed it "interfered" with

other things they would like to do. These figures lent themselves to many and varying interpretations.

A significant difference appeared in the attitude of the two groups toward study of Hebrew. One day a week students placed Hebrew at the bottom, and intensive school children at the top of the subjects they liked, thus raising again the question of the role of Hebrew in Sunday schools.

A survey of parental attitudes indicated that the overwhelming majority (87 per cent) express themselves as being generally satisfied with the schools their children attend. However, it was not clear that this satisfaction rested on a real knowledge of their children's schooling, since a significant number had difficulty naming any subject their child studied. In addition, most detailed comments tended to come from those most critical—particularly from those complaining of inadequate teacher training, repetitious material, and poor teaching methods. Seventy per cent wanted their children to experience a different type of Jewish education from what they had received, of whom 55 per cent wished a more intensive education. None at all desired a less intensive education for their children.

An extremely interesting questionnaire on attitudes of Jewish community leaders revealed a vast gap between what was considered important for adult effective Jewish living and what were considered important school objectives. The schools were overwhelmingly expected to supply learning (Bible study, history study, language study, prayer study), even though relatively low priorities were given to these same pursuits in establishing an effective Jewish living pattern. Conversely, high priority was given by adults to being free of feelings of inferiority or superiority, wholesome attitudes toward Jewishness (and relationships of all kinds), but far less importance was attached to the schools stressing this type of objective.

While giving full weight to the school as a specialized community agency, charged with special responsibilities for Jewish literacy, the question nevertheless forcefully raised itself as to whether an unhealthy gap did not exist between what was valued in Jewish living and what was expected from Jewish schools. General education had certainly closed this gap considerably in recent years—at least in theory—with the growing acceptance of the thesis that schools were both a preparation for life and a living experience in itself. Perhaps Jewish education, and the Jewish community, still had this adjustment to make.

In retrospect, one overwhelming generalization seemed justified from the bewildering amassing of facts. The day of revolt from Jewish education—and Jewish life—was clearly over. Jewish parents seemed ready and in large part eager for increasing commitment to Jewish schooling, if that schooling was keyed to modern pedagogical understanding. The problem was to translate this readiness into specific educational patterns.

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