

**Interim Progress Report**  
**Lippman Jewish Community Day School Transition Project**  
**Prepared by Katie Wells Goodwin and Barb Greene**  
**Project Consultants**  
**September 9, 2009**

**Overview:** The Board of Trustees of the Jerome Lippman Jewish Community Day School (LDS) made the decision to engage in a year-long transition process to expand its curriculum and philosophies to attract a broader base of students and to prepare students in kindergarten through eighth grade to be thoughtful and informed world citizens. Barb Greene and Katie Wells Goodwin were hired by the Lippman Board to facilitate a transition planning process which began in May 2009 and is slated to conclude in October 2009 with the presentation of a recommended transition plan that will begin to take effect in the 2009-2010 school year.

**Purpose:** The transition planning activities cited above have been or are being conducted to:

- Broaden the understanding of key stakeholders of the decision that was made by the board to expand the curricular and philosophical focus of LDS.
- Engage key stakeholders in redefining the mission, vision, key beliefs and culture of LDS.
- Engage staff and other education leaders to make recommendations regarding the present and future curriculum and professional development of the LDS staff.
- Positively shape public perception regarding LDS.
- Enhance the success of student recruitment to LDS.
- Build the spiritual and financial support of LDS within the LDS community, the Jewish community and community-at-large.

**Planning activities to date:** Between May and August, Katie and Barb facilitated a staff meeting, school community forum, two focus groups with parents of children currently or previously enrolled at Lippman, a board visioning session and three meetings of regional education specialists to review and make recommendations regarding the future curriculum of LDS. Separate meetings were held with Linda Brotsky, Trish Crane, Mary Hickcox, Sarah Greenblatt and Jeffery Schein (Judaic studies senior consultant and associate director of family education program and professor at Siegal College), David Koch (CEO of Jewish Community Board of Akron), and Todd Rockoff (Director of the Jewish Community Center of Akron). A press release announcing the future plans of Jerome Lippman Jewish Community Day School was also written and distributed to area media. A letter for the same purpose was sent to the entire database of the Shaw Jewish Community Center. Finally, a commitment was secured by a donor to provide a \$50,000 grant to the school for curriculum enhancements including technology to support curriculum, staff professional development and marketing resources. This \$50,000 grant was made as a challenge to the school to raise an additional \$50,000 to support the implementation of the school's transition plan when it's completed.

**Key Recommendations/Common Themes:**

- There is support for an expanded curriculum focused on preparing students for a global society and world economy, along with a desire to retain Judaic studies, Hebrew language classes, the annual Hebrew play and the middle school trip to Israel.
- The JCC Pre-K program and Lippman all-day kindergarten should be integrated through marketing and curricular efforts.
- LDS should develop and communicate to the entire school community the learning standards and benchmarks by grade, inclusive of opportunities for student enrichment and acceleration, as well the academic assessment method(s) used that are comparable to other state and national assessments.
- Parents desire a welcoming, inclusive school culture that offers a small teacher to student ratio, embraces and demonstrates Judaic values, nurtures spirituality and develops the self-esteem and individuality of each student.

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**Key Recommendations/Common Themes (Continued):**

- After-school enrichment activities that are unique among the universe of area private and parochial schools should be offered to reinforce the school curriculum and to make it easier for working parents to pick up their children after work.
- Parents identified an essential curriculum to include arts and sciences, reading comprehension, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, communication (presentation, interpersonal, writing) skills, technology skills, appreciation for diverse cultures and views, and second language skills.
- Curriculum maps should be developed for each class in each grade to determine where gaps exist within the curriculum, including enrichment activities.
- Technology utilization and 21<sup>st</sup> Century™ skill building activities should be integrated throughout the curriculum. Policies should be developed regarding the use of technology and the privacy of students and staff. An assessment of existing technology resources and recommendations for additional technology should be made. The same should be done regarding staff capacity to use technology to enhance teaching and learning, and the professional growth needs/desires of the staff. Finally, existing barriers to using technology need to be removed, specifically, timely repair of equipment and building firewalls.
- There was strong support to put laptop computers in the hands of all middle school students.
- Dedicated staff time and a budget must be established to support staff development.
- A marketing plan needs to be developed by professionals to reposition the school and attract a broader and larger student population.
- The fund development capacity of school staff and board needs to be expanded.

**Next Steps:** The following activities have been or will be scheduled between late August and October 2009:

1. A professional development in-service session on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills™ facilitated by Bernie Burchett, former director of professional staff development for Akron Public Schools was held at the end of August for all Lippman educators. Further in-services will be pursued to ensure that our teachers are at the forefront of educational instruction.
2. Online Survey: A short online survey, using the resource of Survey Monkey will be developed by Jeffrey Schein, Katie Wells Goodwin and Barb Greene, to elicit additional information from key stakeholders about specific questions relative to the future of Jerome Lippman Jewish Community Day School. The survey will take place in early to mid September.
3. Additional focus groups scheduled with parents within the Jewish community and community-at-large are scheduled for late September and early October.
4. An invitation will be extended to selected marketing firms to attend a meeting to learn about LDS and its transition plans. At the meeting a Request for Proposal process will be announced to secure professional recommendations with cost estimates for the future marketing of the school. Invited marketing firms will include those that have worked with LDS in the past, particularly those that may be inclined to offer some pro bono, in-kind or reduced fee services.
5. A short-term fund development plan will be developed and initiated that includes funding requests of foundations, Ohio and U.S. Departments of Education, alumni parents/grandparents and friends of LDS.
6. Short term recommendations for curricular improvements that support the future transition of LDS will be made, and support will be provided to the principal and staff to develop a 2009-2010 implementation plan, timeline and identification of resources to support the plan.
7. A full implementation plan, with timeline and identification of essential resources, will be presented by the end of October.
8. Technical assistance will be provided to staff to prepare and submit a limited number of grants to support the acquisition of funds for professional development.
9. Consultants will continue to involve key “edutopia” educators.