

Interim Progress Report
Lippman Jewish Community Day School Transition Project
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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 to attract a broader base of students and to help 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 transpire during the 2009-2010 school year.

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 consultant and scholar (Siegal College), David Koch, CEO of The 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. Focus groups scheduled with randomly selected members of the JCC database were cancelled due to an inadequate number of available participants associated with summer vacations and scheduling conflicts. A determination will be made by the end of August about whether or not to reschedule the focus groups in late September. Finally, preliminary efforts have begun to identify funding to support two critical aspects of the transition plan and the future of LDS: The development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing plan that repositions the new school that is evolving; and professional development opportunities to support the staff's use of an expanded curriculum.

Purpose: The transition planning activities cited above have been 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.

This report provides a summary of the transition planning activities that have taken place between May and August 2009, as well as the salient thoughts and recommendations that have emerged among the various stakeholder groups (detailed reports of each activity have been made available to Linda Brotsky, Principal; Trish Crane, Board President; and Mary Hickcox, Vice President and most have been broadly shared with stakeholder groups).

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 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.
- Unique (to the area) after-school enrichment activities should be offered to reinforce learning 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/enrichment activities/assessment methods and incorporate thematic units that are in alignment with the worldview model.
- Technology utilization and 21st 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 should be made of the existing technology resources and recommendations of new technology resources that should be added to the school. 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.
- Target benchmarks for curriculum implementation and assessment should be established for the principal and teaching staff.
- Dedicated staff time and budget must be established to support staff development; create and initiate a marketing plan to reposition the school and attract a broader and larger student population, and build the fundraising capacity of the school.

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

1. August 21: A professional development in-service session on 21st Century Skills™ facilitated by Bernie Burchett, former director of professional staff development for Akron Public Schools will take place for all Lippman educators.
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 Jerome Lippman Jewish Community Day School. The survey will take place in early to mid September.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Short term recommendation 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.
6. A full organizational implementation plan, with timeline and identification of essential resources will be presented in October.
7. 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. This is above and beyond the boundaries of the scope of the contract between LDS and Barb Greene/Katie Wells-Goodwin.