



**School Community Forum
Tuesday, June 2, 2009
Summary Report**

On Tuesday, June 2, 2009, 50-60 people from the Lippman Day School (LDS) community came together to discuss the future of the school. The forum was one of what will be several opportunities for parents, staff, trustees, stakeholders and friends of LDS to offer their thoughts pertaining to the Lippman Board of Trustees' recommendation that the school's present Jewish Day School model transition to a broader, multicultural education model.

The forum's agenda included welcoming remarks from Trish Crane, president of the LDS Board of Trustees; a review of the strategic planning process and factors that led the board to recommend a broader philosophical and curricular framework by Mary Hickcox, vice president of the Strategic Planning Committee; and a review of the transition process timeline and activities by Katie Wells Goodwin and Barb Greene, transition team co-facilitators. The forum also reinforced that Lippman Day School will be open for school on August 25, 2009 with a few exciting changes, and the transition plan will be implemented during the 2009-2010 school year. In the fall of 2010, the school will be operating under the completed new model.

The forum provided an opportunity for participants to have rotating dialogues on three key questions regarding the future position and direction of Lippman Day School:

1. *What part of our school legacy is essential to retain as we expand our vision for the future of LDS?*
2. *In what ways can we model a "world view" that embraces different people, cultures and ways of thinking, and shapes how our children live their lives in this world?*
3. *How do we want LDS to be distinct and unique among the other private and public schools in the region?*

There were a total of six "world cafes" that addressed either questions one, two or three. This allowed for small group sizes and more time for all individuals to be heard. The facilitators (Nina Sand Loud, Rochelle Stone, Debbie Zelin, Laurie Zuckerman, Bill Lamb and Steve Katz) provided a summary of their café dialogues to the entire group of participants at the end of the forum. The dialogues were remarkably similar in terms of the comments offered by participants and there were several shared themes that emerged:

1. While participants struggled with the appropriate terminology (e.g. multicultural, diversity, world view"), most are supportive of a broader philosophical and curricular framework that incorporates the study, appreciation and celebration of world cultures, while retaining a foundation of Jewish values, traditions and culture.
2. There is a strong desire to see LDS continue to offer a vibrant learning environment defined by a strong academic and extra-curricular program, a nurturing environment that supports the individuality of each child, small class sizes, and experiences that reinforce Jewish and universal values and traditions.
3. The opportunity for the JCC pre-school to align with Lippman Day School was a topic that emerged in at least two café dialogues.
4. Participants were enthusiastic in offering a host of ideas for embracing a multicultural philosophical and curricular framework.

World Café Questions Summary of Participant Ideas and Responses:

Question: *What part of our school legacy is essential to retain as we expand our vision for the future of Lippman Day School?*

Ideas and responses from forum participants included:

- Nurturing environment: small teacher-to-student ratio; teachers who care about and appreciate the individuality of each child; buddy system among children
- A diverse and unique curriculum that includes a strong focus on math and science, as well as art, music, physical education, technology, trip abroad, Spotlight on Learning program
- School play for all students
- Maintain Jewish values and traditions
- Keep transportation and hot lunch program (with expanded choices)

Question: *In what ways can we model a “world view” that embraces different people, cultures and ways of thinking, and shapes how our children live their lives in this world?*

Ideas and responses from forum participants included:

- Need to define what “world view” is—perhaps there should be an overview of the ideals of various cultures. Need to research how scholars define multicultural. Our curriculum must still meet and exceed academic standards. Need to teach tolerance and appreciation of cultural differences. Values-based multicultural curriculum is needed across grades.
- Holiday celebrations of other cultures and religions, music, pretend trips
- Integrate study of world cultures and (comparative) world religion into the curriculum—need to research various multicultural curricula
- Observance of the core values of religions and cultures and their impact on America
- Teach Jewish values and traditions within universal context; use real-life examples to illustrate values in action; distinguish between religion and culture.
- Outreach programs—i.e. go to Asian community and invite people/organizations to school
- Teach citizenship and community service—engage entire school.
- Adopt classes in other countries (pen pals); activities on other culture; sessions to discuss and debate current events
- Theme of school: cultural competence, tolerance and acceptance
- Diversify student population—draw from different cultures and nationalities; host visitors
- Use parents and community as resources and involve parents in what kids are learning; have presenters at culmination of a unit; establish “culture clubs” with speakers from community
- Consider visiting other countries that have been studied
- Incorporate what kids eat at lunch
- Need to identify us by the way we market the school to others; everyone should still learn about Judaism
- Make transition gradually through curriculum

Question: *How do we want Lippman Day School to be distinct and unique among the other private and public schools in the region?*

Ideas and responses from forum participants included:

- Have small classes with innovative teaching and individualized attention for students; different groups for reading and math; diverse teaching strategies for different styles of learners; effectively service special needs children
- Affordable; less expensive than other private schools – offering a good value
- Retain strong academics with a math/science concentration, advanced classes
- Attract and develop academically talented, self-confident, well-rounded students with scholarships
- Safe, secure, family environment
- Maintain/demonstrate Jewish values and identity; offer different learning paths for Jewish and secular students; make world cultures meaningful without compromising Jewish values
- Peer mediation among children; rules that all children have to follow
- Technology
- Opportunities for all kids to perform—comfortable on-stage and with themselves
- Other languages not being offered elsewhere such as Chinese, Japanese

- Just elementary, grades K-5; interactive grades through buddy system
- Better marketing
- Citizenship, responsibility, service and being a good person (core Jewish values)
- Unique in approach to middle school: deal with relational aggression—be a mensch, offer conflict resolution skills; engage through excellence, role modeling, small classes; sports
- Exceptional pedagogical skills of teachers
- Shorter school day . . . longer school day with more intensive learning time
- Create an environment of tolerance for all, understanding of cultures, sense of community
- Well-rounded and strong academic program that is values based and that develops strong, confident children; full service (pre-k through grade 8, along with before and after-school care) school, connected to community, art, performing arts, music camp, 8th grade trip