



THE CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED STUDIES IN JEWISH EDUCATION

A RESEARCH INITIATIVE IN JEWISH EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2/26/2014

Educational institutions—be they large or small, start-up or established, stand-alone or sub-organizations within larger institutions, financially strong or under-resourced—depend on effective leadership to achieve their missions. Jewish educational institutions are no different: effective professional leadership is critical for success.

There is a sense among practitioners, lay leaders, academics, and funders of Jewish education that we can and should be doing better in identifying, training, supporting and advancing our educational leaders. While philanthropic and programmatic investments are being directed toward interventions, there is a lack of evidence about what aspects of leadership in the Jewish educational context actually contribute to positive student, family, and institutional outcomes. As a result, efforts and investments constitute our “best guess” about strategic intervention. We now seek to begin to build an evidence base that will take us beyond a “best guess,” informing the refinement of existing interventions and/or the creation of new ones – be they programmatic and/or philanthropic.

The Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education (CASJE) is an effort to promote high quality research that informs the policies and practices of Jewish education. At the heart of the effort is an attempt to change the culture of how, when, why, and by whom research gets done; the overall quality of what gets produced; and the active participation of investors in and practitioners of Jewish education in the building of a robust field of useable knowledge that will actually inform and improve practice.

The CASJE Jewish Educational Leadership Research Initiative aims to inspire, support and coordinate applied research using sound and rigorous methodologies and clear, coherent conceptual frameworks. Such studies will build on other work both from general educational studies and from within Jewish education. They will result in findings and data to be used by stakeholders in Jewish education as well as other researchers. These stakeholders include educators and funders, program developers and policymakers, professionals, trainers, and lay leaders. Over time, a series of studies that are integrated and replicated can inform the development, training, practice, improvement efforts, and impact of Jewish educational leaders and leadership in day school settings.

CASJE has set aside up to a total of \$650,000 for a comprehensive program of research, over a maximum period of five years, to address the priorities described below.

I. Research Priorities

While a myriad of organization types undertake youth education in the Jewish world, in this RFP we consider only Jewish day schools. Although other Jewish educational venues such as overnight and day camps, preschools, synagogue schools, non-synagogue supplementary programs, youth movements, and educational travel also play important roles in educating Jewish youth, this first RFP focuses on day schools as full time Jewish educating institutions with substantial demands and prior investments in Jewish educational leadership. We hope leadership in other environments will be the subject of future work.

The proposed research initiative in Jewish educational leadership will focus on the following priorities:

- 1. The extent to and ways in which Jewish educational leaders and their leadership influence Jewish and general educational outcomes in Jewish Day Schools.**
- 2. The relationship between training and development of Jewish day school leaders and (a) changes in their practices and (b) student outcomes, both Jewish and general.**

We seek research that will deepen our understanding of how leaders can increase their effectiveness in both the educational and operational realm. We are primarily interested in how leaders articulate vision, support and develop educational staff, select content and programs, and create positive cultures to produce positive learning and identity outcomes for students. This research may include how leaders work with teachers, operational teams, lay leaders, funders, and community members. Outcomes of importance may include such areas as quality of teaching and learning in schools general and Jewish academic outcomes, social/emotional/spiritual outcomes, and the development of positive Jewish identity and commitments.

Proposals can also address the relational nature of leadership, such as culture, climate, trust and/or intrapersonal qualities of leaders – their general and Jewish understanding and knowledge; their beliefs and commitments; their personal maturity and range of experiences; their personal and professional identities; and their interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual intelligence – and the role that these qualities play in their work, as it pertains to the research priorities of this call, and particularly as it relates to practice and outcomes.

II. The Current Research Base

Research in the area of Jewish educational leadership has been sparse and disconnected. What exists tends to fall into three distinct categories. 1) case studies of particular, often lauded programs; 2) statistical analyses of surveys given to a subset of educational leaders to determine their thoughts and experiences on particular topics; 3) finally, there are “thought pieces” or anecdotally driven articles written by practitioners. While each of these may contribute in some ways to a deeper understanding of Jewish

education, our understanding and empirical knowledge base of Jewish education as it pertains professional leadership lacks significant rigorous qualitative and quantitative studies: is not built as a program of research and does not have methodologies and measures of leadership effectiveness or outcomes of leadership effectiveness.

Research on Jewish day schools is marginal, with some journal articles, books, or book chapters and a small concentration of dissertations produced in the last few decades. Topics include issues of leadership and management (including retention and transitions), board relationships, and vision. Role development and training, especially for new leaders and new schools, is also an issue explored by some researchers and practitioners.

Much of the methodology relies on qualitative case studies, such as studies of individual school leaders (Mitzmacher, 2012; Perl, 2011; Pekarsky, 2006) or a very small number of schools (Kay, 2009). The other primary method generally used is survey and/or statistical analysis (Rothman, 2010; Schick, 2007; Kramer, 2000 and others). Additionally, expert practitioners and policymakers have offered “thought-pieces” based on experience and anecdotal evidence (see in particular the Spring 2009 and Spring 2012 issues of HaYidion). Notably, several recent high-profile, comprehensive publications on Jewish education do not include explicit or extensive consideration of educational leadership in Jewish day schools. (See for example Pomson and Deitcher, 2009; Miller, Grant, and Pomson, 2011; Goodman, Flexner, and Bloomberg, 2008).

Finally, there is an evidence base and validated measures in the general education domain—particularly in the sub-fields of experiential education, school leadership, spiritual and religious development, second language learning, professional development, curriculum design, etc—that could be translated for use in the Jewish education domain. These study designs, measures, analytic techniques, theoretical frameworks, findings, and working theories have not been adapted for use toward the improvement of Jewish schooling (See for example, Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth et al, 2010; Garet, Porter, Desimone et al, 2001; Porter, Polikoff, Murphy, Goldring, et al, 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Goldring et al, 2009; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008).

Thus, there is a lack of systematically collected and analyzed data about what aspects of day school leadership actually contribute to successful institutions and academic, religious, social, and emotional outcomes for learners. In fact, there is little robust conversation about what we mean by successful schools and learning. For example, do we mean instructionally sound schools producing measurable academic and Jewish outcomes for students? Or do we mean operationally strong and financially sustainable schools? Or do we mean something else altogether? The various aspects of leadership are, therefore, worthy of further study and understanding.

While educators and funders in the field engage in thoughtful, passionate discussion about their work in multiple online and written forums, these conversations are never based on robust, relevant, context specific research, but, rather they are usually drawn from anecdote and abstractions from the general leadership literature. While some

scholars, or aspiring scholars, may be immersed in a particular school, their work rarely builds on the contributions of others towards answering the same questions.

Thus, the issues surrounding educational leadership in this RFP are designed to address more systematic efforts of measurement, documentation, experimentation, analysis and follow-up to build a sturdier knowledge base to guide our future efforts.

III. Proposal Submission Process

At this time, CASJE is launching a two-step proposal process, the first of which invites preliminary proposals toward the conduct of a program of research. The preliminary proposal consists of a brief narrative (specifications below) and references/citation list. The narrative must not exceed 1800 words, not including the references/citation list.

The proposal narrative must include:

1. Project Description: a brief description of project, the central research question(s), and the project's overall significance for the field.
2. Literature Review: a brief summary of the relevant literature, the relationship of the proposed research to that literature, and the new knowledge expected to result from the proposed research.
3. Conceptual Framework and Methods: a brief summary of the conceptual framework, research methods, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis that the project will employ; an explanation of the adaptation, adoption, or creation of new measures necessary for the proposed study.
4. Implications for Practice: an explanation of how the proposed work will yield useable and actionable knowledge for both practitioner and philanthropic actors
5. Project Team: a clear identification of the Principal Investigator(s) and a clear definition of the role(s) he/she and any supporting researcher(s) will play. As noted below, research teams must include partnerships between general education and Jewish education researchers. If necessary, CASJE staff is available to help guide PIs in forming partnerships across fields.
6. Project Timetable
7. Preliminary Budget

Respondents would be well advised to thoroughly review the Full Proposal Specifications and Criteria for Review below prior to submitting preliminary proposals.

Preliminary Proposals are due March 15, 2014. We will hold an optional one-hour informational call with prospective respondents on February 13, 2014 at 9:00 AM PST/12:00 PM EST/ to respond to questions submitted in advance regarding the RFP.

To submit questions and to register for the call, send an email to jelrfp@rosovconsulting.com with a subject line of "JEL RFP Info Call" and include within the message your name, organization, from where you will be calling in, and your questions regarding the RFP. We will reply with the dial-in information.

A subset of Principal Investigators (PIs) will be invited to submit a Full Proposal, the detailed specifications for which follow below. Decisions on preliminary proposals are expected in mid April 2014. Invited full proposals will be due by the end of May 2014 with a final selection expected in late June 2014.

The full proposal narrative must not exceed 50,000 words/ 20 pages double-spaced, in a readable font and font size.

IV. Full Proposal Specifications

If invited to submit a full proposal, PIs will be expected to cover, in depth, the following areas:

i. Research Objectives and Research Questions

Research proposals must link stated research questions to at least one of the research priorities of this RFP and must explicitly articulate a well-developed rationale about how the findings from the proposed research questions will address one or more of the RFP priorities.

Examples of a unique set of research questions could pertain to the extent to which the perceived Jewishness of the educational leader impacts the power of Jewish learning in that school. Do more Jewishly knowledgeable school principals have particular influences on how students learn Jewish studies? Do educational leaders who self-identify as Jewish leaders influence parents in ways that differ from their peers?

Similarly, examples of a unique set of research questions could pertain to training programs and professional development opportunities for leaders in Jewish schools. For example, a number of programs for training Jewish educational leaders emphasize the learning of Jewish content. What level and type of Jewish content addressed in training programs is related to changes in Jewish learning?

Studies of leadership training might also ask: How successful are leaders with different kinds of background and training? Ultimately, how do different forms of training work best with different kinds of leaders or leadership candidates under different conditions? Or, what is the effect of leaders' practices in day schools on the quality of teaching in their institutions? To what extent do training programs that focus on how leaders help support and develop quality curriculum and instruction as they work closely with educators in school settings affect different student outcomes than programs that focus on organizational/administrative issues such as working with boards or funders?

ii. Types of Study Design

There are two genres of applied research that are needed to inform the design, implementation and evaluation of programs to train Jewish educational leaders, and to improve and refine the practices of leaders who are already serving at high levels in

schools. We might call these the analytical retrospective investigation and the experimental prospective study.

The first type of study uses existing populations of leaders and training programs to discover which kinds of interventions and practices appear to be most successful in changing the quality of leadership positively and influencing outcomes for institutions and students. These are analytical, descriptive studies where one searches for examples of more effective and less effective leaders and institutions and then maps backward by asking, “what kinds of training or professional development did the more successful leaders enjoy that might account for their success? To what extent can their effectiveness be attributed to the quality of their training, or types of leadership practices and approaches in the particular settings in which they work?” Done with clearly defined measures of success, and with substantial cases and samples, this type of research can be informative. Furthermore, one can undertake longitudinal prospective surveys, or comparative studies over time to undertake correlational and multivariate studies.

The second genre of study experimentally designs, implements and researches purposeful programs for training Jewish educational leaders, interventions for school improvement such as professional development or policies (e.g. merit pay), and then compares different approaches with one another. In the ideal case, participants are randomly assigned to “treatments.” In more realistic circumstances, we sacrifice that level of control and conduct the comparisons with necessary caution and due diligence in quasi-experiments. We should note that the field of general education, including in the field of education leadership and policy, has been implementing random experiments to a greater extent over the past decade.

In either case, respondents to this RFP will be well advised to state with clarity what kinds of new knowledge their studies will produce and what kinds of decisions, actions, practice, program developments, evaluations or policies will be informed by their work in a manner superior to what is typically the case.

iii. Overall Research Plan/Approach and its Rationale

The research plans presented in response to this RFP must be clearly articulated and explained. The design must follow established, rigorous methodologies, including both qualitative and quantitative paradigms of research. A complete proposal must include a detailed rationale for all methodological approaches and decisions. A wide range of research approaches is possible, for example, studies with a strong comparative element, implementation studies, quasi-experimental studies, multiple case studies, secondary data analyses, and pilot studies that lay necessary foundations for subsequent research. However, stand-alone single case studies or studies with limited samples will not be considered for review. Furthermore, participant, action research (researching one’s own setting, participant satisfaction studies, or stand-alone studies using retrospective self-reporting of outcomes) will not be considered. Research in Jewish education already has many such studies.

The complete research proposal must clearly describe the methodological approach, including specific details of data collection approaches and procedures (observations,

interviews, surveys, tests), and why the proposed design is most appropriate given the research questions and objectives. If, for example, the study is proposing to examine the influence of a training program on the improvement and changes of leader performance, it is important to articulate a rationale for choosing to study a particular program, (the nature of the intervention), how its components will be measured, including a definition and rationale for a comparison group and so on. Complete articulation of data analyses procedures, including statistical models and qualitative coding and analyses procedures are required.

Whether a study is descriptive/analytical or experimental, context variables are highly important. These include characteristics of the leaders, the settings, and the criteria by which their success will be judged. These are also variables that, when specified and measured or documented, permit the findings from one set of studies to be compared and even combined with those from other settings.

We encourage proposals for both shorter-term sub-studies as part of a larger proposed investigation as well as longer-term and longitudinal studies. The success of Jewish schools and the success of leaders is ultimately judged by long-term impacts on students and, possibly, their families. Nevertheless, we cannot typically wait a decade to decide whether to continue along a particular educational course. Therefore, any proposed research must attend to defining a set of features of educational organizations associated with success that comprise more proximate, short-term outcomes as well as longer-term consequences.

iv. Settings and Samples

The most ambitious approaches will engage school settings, participating professionals and clients, or training and other programs and interventions in long-term relationship that can lead to a cumulative archived body of data on the connections between leadership variables, characteristics of settings, and both long and short-term consequences for teachers, students, families and communities.

The winning proposals will need to demonstrate that plans have been forged in which all these participating entities are committed to the research endeavor and recognize the personal and organizational commitment they have made.

Setting and sample choices need to be specified, justified, and delineated in relation to the research question, and the appropriate research methodology and must address the following (as applicable):

- Choice of setting and participants
- Size of sample or total population
- Stratification of sample
- Random assignment, or matching procedures
- Nested samples
- Anticipated response rates

v. Measures, Data Sources and Data Collection Plan

In the response to this RFP, proposals should articulate the specific measures and their conceptualization to address each of the proposed research questions. Proposals should discuss the availability of data elements needed to conduct the research, and discuss issues related to the availability of key data elements; or specify how data not available will be collected.

The proposal should specify and justify all measures, and data collection approaches for key variables and concepts. For example, if classroom observations of quality of teaching will be proposed, it is important to articulate specifically what are the dimensions and definitions of quality teaching, what observation protocols and rubrics will be used, how data will be coded, how and when observations will take place, and how inter-observer reliability will be established.

The proposal should describe in detail the procedures (interviews, surveys, observations, assessments) and the timing of the collection of data including a clear articulation and description of outcome measures. The researcher can propose the development of measures or adaptation of existing measures that address the research priorities.

For example, the proposed project could draw its starting assumptions from findings that are well developed and well researched in public education, independent schools, informal education settings and the parochial school sector. These are measures or features of schools that have been validated and implemented in practice and research. Examples of these features of schools might include:

- High quality teaching
- Strong student-teacher relationship
- Culture of trust and professional learning
- Strong and vibrant parent involvement
- Stable/growing student enrollment
- Stable faculty

These are areas that have all been associated with student achievement (as measured by standardized tests) on the one hand, and have a robust research literature and measures on the other.

Although not without its many limitations, this approach can start the development and validation process of measures in the field of Jewish education. This might move the field past the need to wait until there are measurement instruments and approaches to long-term outcomes in Jewish education; prior efforts often become stymied because of the lack of outcome measures, in such areas as Jewish identity, *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible), Jewish History, and Hebrew language.

A significant contribution of the approach we propose, beyond the substantive findings regarding the most desirable qualities and behaviors of educational leaders, would be conceptualizing measures for Jewish day schools, and adapting instrumentation from

general education to translate those into useable tools to assess educational outcomes and effectiveness in Jewish education.

Some indicators of successful Jewish day schools might include:

- Quality of instruction (using measures from general education that are not content specific, and are validated observation rubrics), amount and types of parent involvement, and Jewish community engagement
- Level of observed or measured trust and morale among staff, students, community
- Strength of teacher professional learning communities
- Opportunities for students to learn
- Direct assessments of changes in student learning, engagement, identity
- Patterns of enrollment and student persistence
- Teacher turnover and stability
- Student Jewish knowledge
- Student Jewish behaviors
- Student Jewish values, beliefs, commitments
- Fundraising performance

Studies may consider the direct and indirect impacts on the student's families in terms of Jewish values, beliefs and commitments. If the proposal includes studying particular programs or settings, the measures section should include specific articulation of the program components and how they will be documented and measured. The proposal should describe how the program and comparison programs would be measured in sufficient detail for appropriate comparisons and descriptions.

vi. Analysis Plan

The analysis plan must flow directly from the conceptual framework that guides the proposed research. The plan will therefore be rooted in the detailed conceptualization and methodology of the proposal. The framework will guide the selection of relevant variables to be measured, hypotheses being tested, and the interpretation of relationships. Whether the predominant mode of research proposed is quantitative or qualitative, we will not consider any proposal that lacks a clear conceptual framework, a detailed research design, and a clear plan of analysis.

Analysis plans should include specific statistical methodologies and rationale for choice of models, addressing such issues as multi-level analyses, missing data, mediating and moderator analyses, and so on. Similarly qualitative analyses should describe in the detail the approach to data analysis, software to be used, and other details.

vii. Research Team – Who Can Apply

Proposals will be considered from teams of researchers that include both novice and veteran scholars. **Teams must include doctoral students and partnerships between general education and Jewish education researchers.** We are also keenly interested

to see evidence of strong relationships between settings to be researched and researchers themselves. Letters of agreement from leaders of participating sites must be included in complete proposals. University-based and, non-profit, and for-profit based researchers are welcome to submit proposals.

Preference will be given to groups of researchers including individuals who have demonstrated experience in:

- Social science research methodology or methodology proposed
- Funding and research in methodology proposed
- Conceptual expertise in proposed area of research – the proposal must be framed within a very clear conceptual framework.
- Preparing deliverables for multiple audiences including lay leaders, funders and practitioners.
- Prior evidence of peer-reviewed publication

viii. Work Plan and Staffing Plan

Proposals should include a clear description of how the research will unfold, when and by whom, specific timelines for each phase of the research, biographies, CVs, roles and responsibilities within the project, percent of time and calendar months per year (academic plus summer) devoted to the project, as well as institutional commitments, resources and capacity to conduct the proposed research for each member of the research team.

ix. Budget

Studies proposed within this research initiative are eligible for funding in the range of \$100,000 - \$200,000 per year. The total request should not exceed \$650,000 over a maximum period of five years.

Budget projections should include costs of required travel for any briefings, conferences, convenings etc. related to this research initiative, as well as the graphic design and production of all reports suitable for public dissemination.

CASJE requires detailed budget information about applicant's proposals. We request budget information in two ways:

- By major project activities
- By line items over the period of the project

The attached forms (Exhibits 1.A and 1.B) or reasonable facsimiles thereof should be used.

x. Reports, Presentation and Artifacts

Respondents should describe the kinds of deliverables they envision developing as part of the study. For example:

- Reports suitable to peer review
- Reports/products/artifacts suitable for practitioners or communications to the field
- Convening study groups, engaging the field in meaning making about the findings of the proposed research

IV. Criteria for Review

Criteria will focus on the following aspects of the proposal:

- Significance and importance of the specific research questions being proposed and potential implications for improvement in Jewish day school education
- Overall quality of the proposed research plan and methodological rigor
- Overall quality of proposed project personnel
- Overall quality, capacity, and skills of proposed project personnel
- The extent to which the proposed study/studies build on existing knowledge in the field and draw from relevant correlating fields
- The proposed budget - does the amount of the budget proposed meet the anticipated benefit?
- Resources available – the extent to which the project team has in hand, or access to the appropriate resources to carry out the proposed work (e.g. sophisticated online survey software, customizable database etc.)
- The extent to which the study articulates and has evidence of clear collaborations with the settings in which the research will take place
- Potential for generalizability of the study findings beyond the project's specific populations and research sites

The Consortium's Advisory Board, comprised of leading scholars in general and Jewish education as well as funders and practitioners of Jewish education, will review all proposals. In sum, all proposals will be judged both on the basis of the skill with which it addresses the designated research questions and the degree to which it is likely to increase capacity for future work in the field.

V. Proposal Review and Selection Timeline

- Information Call With Prospective Respondents
- (February 13, 2014 9:00 AM PST/ 12:00 PM EST)
- Preliminary Proposals Due (March 15, 2014)
- Invitation of Full Proposals (~April 15, 2015)
- Full Proposals Due (~May 30, 2014)
- Final Decision (~June 30, 2014)
- Launch of Research (~August 1, 2014)

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EXHIBIT 1

CASJE PROPOSAL BUDGET

A. Project Budget by Major Project Activities

Please list the costs for each of the major project activities you propose. Some examples include: research design, site visits, data analysis, report writing, conferences and meetings. Administrative and indirect costs should be allocated across these major components so that the sum total for activities equals your total request to CASJE.

For each category in this section, a budget narrative should indicate how the cost was determined.

	Activity	Amount
1.		\$
2.		\$
3.		\$
4.		\$
5.		\$
6.		\$
	Total Requested:	\$

B. Project Budget by Line Items

Please use the attached form to detail total project costs over the grant/contract period. The following are directions on how to complete each section of that form:

1. Personnel

On the budget form, please enter information only on staff directly involved in the project. Exclude staff that will not have specific project tasks or will devote only incidental time to the project. Include these people (in areas like accounting or operations) in your indirect costs.

2. Project Costs

Project costs that are directly related to the project should be included here. A list of categories for these costs is included on the form but you should feel free to add lines you believe are missing. You should not include administrative costs that are applicable to all programs and activities. These indirect or overhead administrative costs should be included in indirect costs.

3. Indirect Costs (Overhead)

Indicate the indirect cost rate if applicable. Indirect costs include equipment and support services (e.g., general administration, development, finance or other organizational costs applicable to all programs and activities, including this project). With rare exception, indirect costs should not exceed 15 percent of direct costs.

4. Subcontracts

If any portion of your grant/contract involves subcontracting work to other organizations, please provide details about the nature of the relationship and activity, as well as the names of the organizations or individuals involved.

PROPOSAL BUDGET

Name of Organization: _____ Date: _____

BUDGET CATEGORIES		BUDGET AMOUNTS BY YEAR							TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET
		Year 1 / /	Year 2 / /	Year 3 / /	Year 4 / /	Year 5 / /	Year 6 / /	Year 7 / /	
1.	PERSONNEL								
	Staff (name/title/salary/ # of days per year)								
	FRINGE BENEFITS (RATE %)								
	TOTAL								
2.	PROJECT COSTS								
	Office Expenses (include postage, copying, mailing, phones)								
	Equipment Rental/Purchase								
	Travel								
	Printing/Publications								
	Consultants								
	Conferences/Meetings								
	Other costs:								
	TOTAL								
3.	INDIRECT COSTS at ___%								
4.	SUBCONTRACTS								
5.	GRAND TOTAL								