



# Mapping the Landscape

*The Emerging Field of Israel Education*



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# Mapping the Landscape

## *The Emerging Field of Israel Education<sup>1</sup>*

### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Israel has been a part of American Jewish Education since the 1930s. It has had diverse names, forms and emphases, usually paralleling the metamorphoses of American Jewish life along with the evolving story of contemporary Israel.

Reports beginning in 1959 (the Dushkin and Engleman study) until today document a presence of Israel, but a more predominantly a confusion, ambivalence and ambiguity of its meaning in Jewish Education.

In 2003, a study was commissioned by the Gilo Family Foundation which documented the unhealthy state of this subject and called for “Israel Education to become a field in its own right – with the requisite development of a curricular approach, systemized training, professionalization and the creation of a ‘central address’ to coordinate and streamline this process.”

Over the past decade, a series of indicators point to a developing response to that call. Though much work remains to be done, it seems legitimate to identify the emergence of a field of Israel Education that encompasses clear definitions, foundational principles, professional development frameworks and twenty-first century educational expertise.

Current efforts focus on Israel Education as an integrated dimension of Jewish Education, as learner centered, as taking place in a wide range of Jewish Educational frameworks, and as encompassing cognitive, affective and behavioral components.

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<sup>1</sup>This Landscape Mapping was compiled over the course of four months and included the review and analysis of extensive documentation, reports and surveys. Data points from eight key reports have been integrated into this overview (see bibliography in Appendix A-3). In addition, educational consultants conducted curricular analysis, participant observations and ethnographic vignettes to gather additional data for this report. The iCenter staff undertook three informal surveys (Denominations, Communities and Public High School Hebrew Programs). A list of survey informants appears in Appendix A-4.

Israel Education is defined as distinct from the fields of Israel Studies and Israel Advocacy in that it aims to nurture an informed relationship between a person and the totality of Israel, so that Israel becomes part of how the person thinks about him/herself as a Jew.

Many Jewish educators do not yet see themselves as empowered Israel educators. They often work in isolation, with disconnected standards of practice and diffuse communities of educators to support them. Though curricula exist, many are not learner centered, relevant, or developmentally appropriate. And widespread Hebrew language and culture immersion, which many agree is an integral component of good Israel Education, is still woefully inadequate.

Developments in digital and mobile technology, as well as the phenomenon of Taglit-Birthright Israel, have transformed the landscape in the last decade. The Jewish community has yet to fully understand and embrace the potential of these developments for the benefit of Israel Education.

The key building blocks of field development have been put in place since 2003.<sup>2</sup> Standards of practice have been identified and articulated. Professionalization of the field has begun to happen through regular conferences on Israel Education and certification programs by academic institutions. Makom, the Center for Israel Education at Emory and the iCenter have emerged as capacity-building addresses for the field. And key funders are embracing Israel Education as a long-term strategic priority.

This report highlights developments since 2003, and recommends four major areas for building on the foundation laid over the past decade:

1. Promulgate standards of practice for the field
2. Increase availability and access to high-quality, developmentally-appropriate content and resources
3. Invest in intensifiers that can be deployed across settings
4. Experiment, take risks and expand offerings

A full articulation of these areas is found in the report. In addition, strategic goals that would represent significant advancement of the field are identified.

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<sup>2</sup> "What Does Field-Building Mean for Service-Learning Advocates?", Melinda Fine, October 2001

## II.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

### *A. An Historical Sketch*

Israel Education has always reflected the context in which it takes place. In the 1920s and 30s, the State of Israel had yet to be founded. Palestine could be understood as a pioneering dream, as well as a welcoming refuge. The majority of American Jews were focused on acculturating to life in America. With the declaration of the State, and continuing through 1967, Israel was a young, brave, democratic nation “making the desert bloom.” At the same time, American Jews were defined by denominations, making supplementary school the predominant form of Jewish Education, moving to the suburbs and climbing the socioeconomic ladder. The pinnacle of this era was the 1967 War, a zenith of Jewish pride.

Beginning in the 1970s, the place of Israel in American Jewish life began to change. This period witnessed the first serious efforts at the de-legitimization of Israel via the United Nations “Zionism is Racism” resolution. The narrative of the young brave Israel had begun to shift. The investment of the Federation world in Israel epitomized by the slogan of the 1980s, “We Are One,” found expression in Israel and the United States.

With the publication of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, Jewish institutions began to focus heavily on continuity. At the same time, funding sources shifted as private foundations became increasingly important players. The dramatic growth of the media, on-the-spot war reporting, and most of all, the Internet, assumed powerful new roles in “educating” American Jews about Israel.

The last ten years have marked a time of further changes: the second Intifada challenged the image of Israel yet again, while the success of Taglit-Birthright Israel in sending over 300,000 young Jews to Israel brought a new emphasis on travel to Israel and *mifgash* (interaction) between Americans and Israelis. Equally significant, more educators began to recognize that the American-Israeli relationship was not a one-way street—that Israelis were deeply affected by the encounter with American Jews as much as their American counterparts were with Israelis. Israel and American Jewry could be said to enter a new more mature phase of their relationship—a relationship that could take place in person, as well as online.

This is a very rough sketch. But it helps to situate the critical context for this report (see Appendix A-1 for a detailed chart). For American Jews during most of this period, Israel has been something distinct, foreign and other—and at the same time, a place and an idea that evokes deep feelings.

Over the past eight decades:

- Israel Education was often shaped *in response* to prevailing attitudes in politics and society.
- Israel Education was often *about* Israel, but not necessarily woven together *with* Israel.
- Israel Education, while being a part of Jewish Education, was often a confusing, ambivalent and not well-integrated component.

A prevailing theme in the field is a need for constancy and consistency in Israel Education that supersedes news cycles, economic realities and shifting dynamics in relationships.

Over the past decade, the Jewish community has come to recognize and prioritize an emerging field of Israel Education that reflects the changes in relationship and attitudes, in politics, society and technology, and in educational philosophy, that have helped shape the current moment. Far from peripheral, Israel Education is beginning to emerge as an integral element of Jewish Education and Jewish identity formation.

## *B. Background to This Report*

In 2003, the Gilo Family Foundation commissioned a report to gain a better understanding of Israel Education in North America. The report found that while Israel Education took place in many settings and had passionate individual champions, it lacked the structures and contours of a field of practice. Many educators charged with delivering Israel Education felt ill equipped to do so. Educators working with different frameworks found themselves “reinventing the wheel” time and again. Israel Education lacked critical elements such as a clear conceptual framework, shared language and standards of practice.

Distinct from the many organizations founded since 2003 aimed at emerging adults (ages 18-26) and addressing critical issues of Israel Advocacy, the iCenter was launched in 2008 by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the Jim Joseph Foundation to address pre-collegiate Israel Education in the North American Jewish community.

The iCenter has served as a think-tank, convener and catalyst for articulating standards of practice and enhancing professional approaches to Israel Education.

The iCenter has facilitated cross-fertilization among settings that engage in Israel Education, expanding professional development opportunities for Israel educators, and addressing the complexities of this unique and critical educational enterprise.

Now in its fourth year of operation, the iCenter commissioned this updated mapping landscape of Israel Education with the following goals in mind:

1. To provide an overview of the **evolution of the field** as a whole over the past decade
2. To provide an overview of the **settings** where Israel Education is experienced and to map the evolution of these settings in their approach to Israel Education
3. To synthesize the growing body of research on specific aspects of the field and provide a summary and **aggregation of findings across reports**
4. To identify priorities and formulate a set of actionable **recommendations for the field** going forward

### *C. Defining Israel Education*

What is Israel Education? In her 2011 study, “Defining Israel Education,” Bethamie Horowitz proposed a seven-point definition of Israel Education based on in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the field. These points serve as the foundation for the expanded definition, which is presented here:

1. Israel Education aims to **forge a relationship between the individual person and Israel**, so that it becomes part of how a person thinks about him/herself as a Jew.
2. Israel Education seeks to promote identity outcomes; therefore, it is **learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, ongoing and holistic**. It involves multi-dimensional engagement with Israel over time.
3. Israel Education is an **integral component of Jewish Education**. The vast majority of Israel Education takes place in Jewish Educational settings.
4. Israel Education **extends beyond traditional formal and informal settings**, to a wider range of educating agents – including parents and families, as well as others – in shaping the outlooks of the learner.
5. Israel Education includes **Israel travel and personal interaction with Israelis** as essential. *Mifgash* takes place in Israel and at home.
6. Israel Education views **Hebrew language** acquisition as critical.
7. Israel Education is **a life-long project**—it begins in childhood and extends through all life phases.

Israel Education ultimately recognizes that it is the strength of the learner’s relationship with Israel and the place that Israel occupies in the mind and heart of the student, coupled with solid content, that is of utmost importance.

### *D. Differentiating Israel Education from Advocacy Training, Branding and Israel Studies*

This identification of the key elements of Israel Education comes at the same time as the field is being differentiated from other forms of engagement, particularly the areas of Advocacy Training, Branding and Israel Studies.

In her 2011 study, Bethamie Horowitz also explores the distinctions between these endeavors. We have adapted and summarized them as follows:

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Main Purpose</b>	<b>Target – Who It Is Intended to Influence</b>	<b>Age Group – Who Participates</b>
<b>Advocacy</b>	Train people to promote Israel and to respond to attempts to de-legitimize Israel	Primarily Others	Teens Young Adults Adults
<b>Branding</b>	Develop a more positive image of Israel in the community and in the media	Both Jews and Others	All
<b>Israel Studies</b>	Develop knowledge about Israeli history, society and culture	Both Jews and Others	Young Adults Adults
<b>Israel Education</b>	Cultivate a connection to Israel as part of the person’s self-understanding as a Jew	Jews	Children through Adults

The primary distinction between Israel Education and Israel Studies is that Israel Studies is an academic field centered on conveying knowledge – not on cultivating a relationship between student and subject matter.

Israel Studies has expanded significantly over the past decade as an academic field in its own right. A 2011 survey prepared by Michael Colson for the Leichtag Foundation shows that 29 programs in Israel Studies have been established on American university campuses.

These vary in their composition and arrangement, but the number indicates the growth of the field over the last decade.

The primary distinction between Israel Education and Israel Advocacy Training is that the latter is designed to promote a positive view and specific positions about Israel, or to defend Israel against de-legitimization. It is aimed primarily at older high school and college students and emerging adults.

One of the foundational assumptions in Advocacy Training is that these teens/young adults have already formed critical thinking skills and are able to contextualize information within their own frames of reference and experience.

The comparison of Branding and Israel Education is also instructive. Branding involves taking charge of communications regarding Israel to highlight the positive and move media and community attention “beyond the conflict.”

The vast majority of 15 Israel organizations and initiatives founded over the past decade focus on Advocacy or Branding (see full list in Appendix A-2). Only three of the new initiatives focus on Israel Education: Makom, the Center for Israel Education at Emory University and the iCenter.

Israel Education is also different from “teaching Israel.” In the Gilo Report, many educators saw themselves as teaching about Israel – a body of knowledge to be mastered about a far-off country. The concept of “Israel Education” embraces the notion that when we teach Israel, we are teaching about a piece of our self and developing our own identities in relation to Israel.

Thus, Israel Education is distinct from other approaches. It is learner centered with a focus on content; it is developmentally appropriate; it begins in childhood; and it is focused on the relationship of the learner with the totality of Israel.

## *E. Hallmarks of a Field*

### **Capacity-Builders**

The development of the field has been spurred on by the founding of capacity-builders dedicated to empowering actors in the field, providing skills training and supporting collaboration across the field. Capacity-builders help to frame, convene and support the work of educators to do their work better. Three main examples are: the Center for Israel Education (which established its teacher training program in 2007), Makom (originally the North American Center for Israel Education, founded in 2003) and the iCenter (founded in 2008). Collectively, these organizations support the development of a field of Israel Education. These capacity-builders have been most effective when working in partnership with existing communal frameworks, thus leveraging existing resources to build local capacity in effective and efficient ways.

### **Shared Language and Standards of Practice**

In 2010, the iCenter assembled a diverse team of reflective educators charged with articulating a language of practice for the field. In 2011, the iCenter published “The Aleph Bet of Israel Education,” a set of eleven framing values, ideas and practices that serve as a foundation for standards of excellence in Israel Education.

Each of the eleven Aleph Bet components highlights an essential element of Israel Education and, together, they serve as the basis for re-framing the foundation of Israel Education. (See Appendix A-7)

Along with a shared definition of “Israel Education,” additional hallmarks of an emerging field are beginning to take shape. According to Melinda Fine, “a field is an area of specialized practice encompassing specific activities carried out by trained practitioners in particular settings” (Melinda Fine, 2001).<sup>3</sup> Fine identified eleven elements that define a field. The following chart explores the current field of Israel Education in relation to these eleven elements.

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<sup>3</sup> “What Does Field Building Mean for Service-Learning Advocates? Melinda Fine, Ed.D, prepared for the Academy for Educational Development, October 2001

FIELD ELEMENT	ISRAEL EDUCATION IN 2012
<p><b>IDENTITY</b></p> <p>Based on a distinct, recognized practice that can be clearly described.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear definition of Israel Education and its distinction from other endeavors has been articulated; now it must be promulgated</li> <li>▪ Emerging cadre of Jewish educators identify as Israel educators, but numbers are small and for many, it is not a primary identification</li> </ul>
<p><b>KNOWLEDGE BASE</b></p> <p>Credible evidence derived from research and practice of how to obtain results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initial field research has focused on describing an emerging field and articulating best practices</li> <li>▪ Additional evidence-based study and codification of best practices required</li> </ul>
<p><b>WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Trained practitioners, researchers, and practitioner educators; structures for training, credentialing, supporting, and retaining a workforce; incentives and structures for leadership development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Several promising programs have emerged to train and credential educators</li> <li>▪ More incentives are required to enable settings to create paid positions for Israel educators</li> <li>▪ No formal structures exist for leadership development</li> </ul>
<p><b>STANDARD PRACTICE</b></p> <p>Descriptions of standard practice, common language, and interventions meriting best practice status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards of practice (Aleph Bet of Israel Education) have been articulated, but are not yet promulgated or consistently integrated into practice</li> </ul>

<p><b>PRACTICE SETTINGS</b></p> <p>Settings that are appropriate and equipped for practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multiple settings serve as context for Israel Education</li> <li>▪ Settings need customized incentives and support to expand and enhance Israel Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COLLABORATION</b></p> <p>Structures and institutions that facilitate collaboration such as professional organizations, convenings, networks and conferences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over a dozen frameworks and convenings have emerged to bring Israel educators together and facilitate collaborative thinking and practice (see Appendix A-5)</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESOURCES</b></p> <p>Adequate financial and other resources to ensure standard practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A cadre of dedicated funders and champions has emerged; that group needs to be expanded</li> </ul>
<p><b>CRITICAL MASS OF SUPPORT</b></p> <p>Key constituencies including practitioners, researchers, administrators, clients, influential leaders, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practitioners and researchers have mobilized to support Israel Education</li> <li>▪ Need more engagement of administrators, parents and communal leaders</li> </ul>
<p><b>ADVOCATES</b></p> <p>Adherents who foster support of critical constituencies and ensure appropriate policy context at pertinent institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many educational institutions have embraced Israel Education as an idea, but most have yet to implement it as a priority</li> </ul>
<p><b>SYSTEMIC SUPPORT</b></p> <p>Appropriate communal policy and incentives that encourage practitioners to learn and use standard practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More promotion and support is needed at the communal level</li> </ul>

### III.

## WHERE DOES ISRAEL EDUCATION HAPPEN TODAY?

### *A. Common Components Contrasted Across Settings*

Over the decades, the Jewish community has developed an impressive array of educational institutions, all of which have had Israel as part of their agenda in varying ways and degrees. Reflecting the changes of the last ten years, some of these institutions have developed innovative approaches to weaving Israel Education more seamlessly into the fabric of their lives.

The Melton Centre completed a comprehensive survey of Israel Education in one of these settings – the day school (2009 for the AVI CHAI Foundation). The study identified five key vehicles of Israel Education that can be expanded to describe the ways in which Israel Education manifests across multiple settings.

The five key vehicles identified by the Melton Centre include:

1. **Curricula** – courses of study
2. **Personnel** – employing Israelis as educators, utilizing *shlichim* and creating staff positions for Israel educators
3. **Israel Experience** – providing structured opportunities for participants and educators to travel to Israel
4. **Special Events** – celebrating Yom Ha’atzmaut and creating other opportunities for experiencing Israeli culture
5. **Partnerships** – including twinning programs and other forms of *mifgash*

While **Modern Hebrew** was not listed as an individual component, the teaching and integration of Modern Hebrew into the life of the institution was noted as integral.

The following chart summarizes the place of these six core elements in formal and informal educational settings, as well as components that can enhance impact.

	DAY SCHOOLS	SYNAGOGUE SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM	<p>Israel education curricula exist. Many are not high quality, current, and/or accessible.</p> <p>Model programs point to the significance of a <b>systemic integration of Israel across curriculum.</b></p>	<p>Typically, a year is dedicated to Israel as a subject in K-8, usually 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>Examples of <b>spiral curriculum</b> exist, but are not yet the norm.</p>
PERSONNEL	<p>Day schools employ many Israelis and <i>shlichim</i>.</p> <p>A <b>designated Israel educator</b> enhances potential impact, but is rare.</p>	<p>Israelis are employed as teachers, but as a rule, there is little use of <i>shlichim</i>.</p> <p>A <b>designated Israel educator</b> role has emerged as a significant intensifier.</p>
ISRAEL EXPERIENCE	<p>Many schools offer student trips; teacher trips have decreased, often due to funding.</p> <p>An <b>Israel trip</b> is a high-impact component of Israel Education</p>	<p>Some congregations offer family trips and/or 10<sup>th</sup> grade trips.</p> <p>In congregations where <b>Israel trips</b> take place, there is a notable connection to Israel within the synagogue community.</p>
SPECIAL EVENTS	<p>Some schools have student Israel clubs responsible for planning and implementing these special events.</p> <p>These events provide opportunity for <b>peer empowerment.</b></p>	<p>Good potential for integrating special, one-time events into the overall curriculum.</p> <p>School-wide celebrations are one of the most far-reaching opportunities for engagement with Israel.</p>
PARTNERSHIPS	<p>Some schools are making greater use of technology in twinning and <i>mifgash</i>.</p> <p>The <i>mifgash</i> (among students and between educators) is a meaningful component.</p>	<p>Some promising models for the <b>twinning of youth, families and congregations</b> are emerging.</p>
MODERN HEBREW	<p>Hebrew curricula often used, include TaL AM and NETA which are infused with Israeli culture and content.</p> <p><b>Proficiency in conversational Hebrew</b> is strongly connected to identity development.</p>	<p>There is significant focus on liturgical Hebrew learning.</p> <p><b>Mifgashim</b> and/or an <b>experience in Israel</b> animate interest in Modern Hebrew.</p>

	CAMPS	YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS
CURRICULUM	<p>There has been extensive investment in developing Israel curricula for camp.</p> <p><b>Systemic efforts</b> to infuse Israel holistically throughout the camp experience are most sustainable.</p>	<p>More focus on one-off Israel sessions than curricula.</p> <p>A <b>centralized hub for educational resources</b> appropriate for a youth movement setting could enhance the implementation of Israel programs.</p>
PERSONNEL	<p><i>Shlichim</i> are widely used as educators and specialists. However, camp staff that are alumni of Israel trips are an under-utilized resource.</p> <p>A <b>designated Israel educator</b> can enhance the presence of Israel throughout a camp.</p>	<p><i>Shlichim</i> are used in many of the organizations.</p> <p>Israel is more often integrated into programming where there are <b>designated Israel educators</b> working within youth organizations.</p>
ISRAEL EXPERIENCE	<p>Nearly half of residential Jewish summer camps offer an Israel trip; most are not incorporated into the camp continuum.</p> <p>When the <b>Israel trip is integrated into the camp continuum</b>, the presence of Israel in camp is heightened.</p>	<p>Most movements offer an Israel trip.</p> <p>The trip is most impactful when incorporated as part of the youth organization's <b>programming continuum</b>.</p>
SPECIAL EVENTS	<p>Many camps make excellent use of special events to infuse Israel, including all-camp programming, specialties and master classes.</p> <p>Impact of special events is greater when <b>integrated into the camp</b> as part of an ongoing Israel educational program.</p>	<p>Special events are widely used in youth movement settings to engage with Israel.</p> <p>These events can be more impactful when integrated as part of an <b>ongoing educational program</b>.</p>
PARTNERSHIPS	<p><i>Shlichim</i> provide a <i>mifgash</i> experience for staff despite a low ratio of Israelis to Americans.</p> <p><i>Mifgash</i> is significantly less prevalent for campers.</p>	<p>Not widely used, but offers strong potential.</p> <p><b>Personal interaction with Israeli peers</b> can significantly enhance connections to Israel and with Israelis.</p>
MODERN HEBREW	<p>There are camps with model approaches to Hebrew integration, they are more common in Zionist, or denominational affiliated camps.</p> <p>Camp offers opportunity for <b>Hebrew immersion</b>.</p>	<p>In the majority of cases, very little Modern Hebrew is incorporated.</p> <p><b>Infusing Hebrew</b> into the fabric of a youth organization creates organic exposure to Israel.</p>

	COMMUNITY-BASED INSTITUTIONS
CURRICULUM	Some institutions have assumed a coordinating role to promote a systemic approach to integrating Israel into their schools' educational programming.
PERSONNEL	<p><i>Shlichim</i> and Israel educators are used. There are some excellent community models that could be replicated. Lack of funding is a recurring issue.</p> <p>Presence and utilization of <i>shlichim</i> or dedicated Israel educators offer greater potential for community-wide impact.</p>
ISRAEL EXPERIENCE	Community institutions often work to promote Israel travel and offset costs. Some offer community-based trips with pre and post programming.
SPECIAL EVENTS	Artists in residence, film festivals, Yom Ha'atzmaut and other celebrations are most common. These events provide engagement with Israel for a wide spectrum of the community, including the local Israeli community.
PARTNERSHIPS	<p>Many examples of <i>mifgash</i> through Partnership 2000 communities exist in varying models.</p> <p>Person-to-person interaction is impactful for both highly connected individuals and for those with little relationship to Israel.</p>
MODERN HEBREW	Opportunities to learn Hebrew vary, but overall, an area with much room for improvement.

*See Appendix A-6 for more information on frameworks.*

## *B. Key Intensifiers*

### **Systemic Approach**

Israel Education is most effective when it is planned for as part of a holistic, system-wide approach to the educational experience and not merely as an add-on or series of one-time events.

### **Organizational Mission**

Agencies and organizations that include Israel Education as an explicit component of their mission statement signify that it is an integral element of their philosophy and approach.

### **Designated Israel Educator**

Schools, camps, community agencies and other organizations that designate a specific individual to carry the portfolio of integrating Israel Education into their work show far more success than those that don't.

### **Israel Experience with *Mifgash***

Across all settings, *mifgash* has been shown to be the most effective catalyst for deeper engagement with Israel on the part of North American participants.

## *C. The Teen Israel Experience*

Lapid was founded in 2008 as a coalition to strengthen the community of high school study and travel programs in Israel, and to lobby for recognition and financial support. Lapid has helped to keep the Teen Israel Experience on the communal agenda, including that of the government of Israel. The Jewish Agency for Israel has always maintained an interest in teen Israel travel and has commissioned several studies to track participation in the Israel Experience.

A 2011 study conducted by Ramie Arian and sponsored by the iCenter indicated the following:

- Roughly 11,000 teens traveled to Israel in 2010 – almost the same number that participated in peer-trips to Israel in the late 1990s. One difference, however, is that over 130 agencies took teens to Israel in 2010.
- The majority of teens traveled with youth organizations, middle schools, high schools, community trips and camps.
- The *mifgash* is becoming a normative part of the teen Israel travel experience, with a few select groups extending it to the full length of their programs.

Based on two iCenter convenings of 30 teen Israel trip stakeholders, the following was underscored:

1. An experience in Israel must be seen as an essential component of Jewish Education. Ideally, students participate in multiple Israel Experiences over time.
2. The Israel Experience is most impactful as part of a Jewish Educational continuum (pre- and post-trip programming).
3. Teen years are critical from a developmental perspective to help form identity and relationships.

### *D. Innovation and Educational Entrepreneurship*

At the same time as traditional frameworks of Israel Education have begun a process of reinvention and renewal, the past decade has witnessed some important innovation of approaches and resources in Israel Education.

#### **The Birthright Phenomenon**

Over the last ten years, more than 300,000 young Jews have gone to Israel on Birthright trips. Not only have they gone, but also they have returned to homes where they have younger siblings and parents. These 300,000 represent the shapers of a new culture vis-à-vis Israel and Israel Experience. The field has not yet leveraged this phenomenon to develop educators, frameworks and standards that could inform and impact Israel Education in North America.

#### **Media and Cyberspace**

Digital media and real-time communication tools are still in the early stages of deployment in Israel Education. Individual projects have twinned Israeli and American day schools. Teens traveling to Israel use mobile devices and social media to document their trips and stay in touch with *mifgash* participants upon their return. The possibilities of “prosumerism,” in which students are not only consumers, but also producers of the learning process, have yet to be tapped on a wide scale. This is crucial to how this generation learns and forms **their** identities.

#### **Outreach to the “Identified but Unaffiliated”**

There is an emerging demographic group known as “identified but unaffiliated,” in which a parent, or parents identify as Jews, but are not affiliated with any Jewish institutions. This population is looking for ways to connect culturally. There are a growing number of examples around the country of initiatives being sponsored by parents and other volunteers. This is an opportunity to be further developed.

## **Niche Frameworks for Hebrew Language and Culture Immersion**

**Hebrew Language Charter Schools** has emerged a growing movement over the past decade. The first of such schools was established in Florida under the Ben Gamla Network. The Hatikvah Academy in New Jersey currently serves 148 students and is expected to grow to 372.

The Hebrew Language Academy Charter School has established one school in Brooklyn, New York serving 308 students and is in the process of establishing a second school, with an additional eight schools under development. It is safe to say that within the next five years, thousands of students across the country will have the opportunity to achieve a high level of mastery in Modern Hebrew and be immersed in Israeli culture while receiving a quality public school education.

It should be noted that Hebrew Language Charters are intended to serve a broad population and do not provide Jewish Education. However, their emergence significantly increases the opportunity for studying Modern Hebrew and the cadre of educators involved in Israel Education.

**Public High Schools** across the United States offer Modern Hebrew for credit. Enrollment in these 32 programs ranges from 30-150 students per school. Students receive 45-50 minutes per day of Hebrew instruction, five days a week, for four years. The instructors in these programs, for the most part, lack formal training in second-language acquisition and had never convened as a professional group on a national level prior to 2011- some had convened at the local level. They remain without appropriate curricular resources and often rely on adapting college-level textbooks.

In some cities, high school students can earn public school credit for studying Hebrew at a local Jewish institution. Additionally, there are several junior high schools and an elementary public school district that offer Hebrew. There is interest in several cities to establish new Hebrew language programs in local public high schools. Public school Hebrew language programs represent a potentially significant and underdeveloped area.

# IV.

## WHAT WE KNOW NOW

### A. An Updated View of the Field of Israel Education

As we evaluate the state of Israel Education today, it is useful to compare it with the situation as presented in the 2003 Gilo Report:

2003		2012
General Observation	Specific Challenges	Current State
No Real Field of Israel Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of a shared language for the field</li> <li>▪ Confusion about the term “Israel Education”</li> <li>▪ No conceptual framework or standards of practice</li> <li>▪ No professional development</li> <li>▪ Educators feel disempowered to handle material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emerging conceptual framework and standards of practice–Aleph Bet of Israel Education</li> <li>▪ Greater clarity about the meaning and goals of “Israel Education”</li> <li>▪ New intensive academic certification programs</li> <li>▪ Targeted professional development modalities emphasize educator empowerment</li> </ul>
Absence of an Ideological & Conceptual Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diffuse content, lack of clear educational goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emerging sense of the key components of Israel Education</li> </ul>
Israel Education Reflects Broader Themes in Israel-Diaspora Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on ‘mythic’ Israel, rather than contemporary Israel</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on the Mideast conflict and Israel as recipient of American aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Move toward greater mutuality</li> <li>▪ Greater emphasis on contemporary Israel</li> <li>▪ Centrality of <i>mifgash</i> and Israelis</li> </ul>
Israel Education Lacks a Systematic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little integration between formal and informal settings</li> <li>▪ Educators saw Israel as separate from other areas of Jewish Education</li> <li>▪ A lack of curricular resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emerging sense of a systemic and holistic approach</li> <li>▪ Increased awareness of Israel Education as an integral element of a Jewish Education</li> <li>▪ Increased cross-fertilization among settings</li> <li>▪ Developmentally-appropriate resources are still lacking</li> </ul>
The Israel Experience Needs to Become Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for greater follow-through</li> <li>▪ Need for greater fluency in Modern Hebrew</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over 300,000 young adults have participated in Taglit-Birthright Israel</li> <li>▪ Immense increase in number of providers of teen trips to Israel</li> <li>▪ Hebrew fluency remains a challenge</li> </ul>
Lack of Champions for the Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No central organizations dedicated solely to Israel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More dedicated professionals</li> <li>▪ Increased long-term philanthropic commitment</li> <li>▪ New agencies whose vision is Israel Education</li> </ul>

## *B. Additional Trends*

We can identify a number of critical trends and developments to help further understand where Israel Education is today.

### **Growing Academic Interest in the Field of Israel Education**

In addition to the significant growth of the academic field of Israel Studies, there is a nascent academic field of the study of Israel Education. Scholars at Hebrew University, Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Spertus Institute, Brandeis University, New York University, Yeshiva University and others are producing articles, monographs and books on diverse aspects of this subject.

### **Informing Educational Approaches with Developmental Theory**

With a new appreciation of learner-centered pedagogy and a focus on cultivating a student's relationship with Israel, Israel Education as a field is remarkably rooted in developmental theory. What is educationally appropriate for a young child is different than what is appropriate for a teenager. What works for a teen is different than what works for an emerging adult (18-28). Bringing a deep awareness of developmental theory to Israel Education has had important positive effects and must continue to be cultivated.

### **Collaboration Among Diverse Networks**

In recent years, the Jewish community has made several significant strides in meaningful collaborative models. As previously mentioned, all three major Israel Education platforms, by philosophy and necessity, have worked in bringing together diverse local, regional and national partners. More can be done to explore expanding these approaches and bringing together strategic partnerships. Additionally, Israel Education continues to benefit from "sibling" disciplines, including Experiential Education. From creating meaningful relationships to immersive "mountain-top" experiences, much can be learned from these pedagogies and techniques.

### **Knowledge Sharing and Impact Assessment**

When innovative programs are launched they enable new practices to flourish among those fortunate enough to participate. But because of a lack of opportunity to take stock of their practice, those who carry out such programs can lack a clear sense of why things worked and why they didn't. Rarely do practitioners beyond innovative programs learn what was involved. A field-wide investment in case studies and case-based learning will enable practitioners to make sense of their own work and also learn from the experiences of others.

### *A. Promulgate Standards of Practice for the Field*

The Aleph-Bet of Israel Education has provided the beginnings of a language for the field. The next stage in field development is to translate these foundational values into standards of practice and to popularize them throughout the field. This necessitates:

#### **Systemic Thinking and Approaches**

- Educators, funders and capacity-building agencies must work together to develop a holistic approach to Israel Education that creates a continuum of learning and experiences across frameworks and over a lifetime.

#### **Professional Development**

- Educators need a robust infrastructure of opportunities to connect with one another, reflect on best practices, learn new information and to share new approaches.
- Core competencies must be articulated for Israel educators—both for those who are Israel specialists and for Jewish educators more broadly.
- Certification programs should be developed and more positions should be created for Israel educators.
- The role of North American Israel trip madrichim should be re-imagined to include greater professionalization and year-round involvement.
- The vast numbers of passionate Israeli and North American Israel trip alumni should be leveraged as experiential educators, or in the case of teens, as peer educators.

#### **Impact Assessment**

- Individual initiatives should be designed with clear goals, metrics and impact assessment built in. At the same time, stakeholders must remember that some elements of excellent education, including the essential heart and integrity of the teacher, are intangible.

#### **Knowledge Sharing**

- Infrastructure needs to be created for knowledge sharing of assessment and learnings, in order to be widely shared and discussed.

## *B. Increase Availability and Access to High-Quality Developmentally-Appropriate Resources*

Excellent education roots rich content in the experience of the learner. To build the field of Israel Education, curricula, resources and pedagogies must be attuned to the developmental reality and experience of learners.

### **Early Childhood and Elementary Grades**

- Israel Education should focus on nurturing a child's connection to Israel.
- There is a need for curricular resources and materials for elementary school age children.

### **Middle and High School**

- Israel Education must continue to nurture the student's personal sense of connection while also embracing the student's increasing capacity for critical thinking.
- The high-quality materials that do exist (aimed primarily at 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) are not sufficient, or widely available and lack a distribution system.

### **Family Education**

- New approaches to Israel Education must recognize the needs and potential of both affiliated families and the growing demographic of families who are identified but unaffiliated.
- There are very few Israel curricula or resources for family education.

## *C. Invest in Intensifiers That Can Be Deployed Across Settings*

Research has demonstrated that some components contribute significantly to the enhancement of Israel Education. These components can be applied across different educational settings with positive results. Intensifiers found to be most significant are:

### **Embracing Israel Education as Part of Mission**

Institutions need internal clarity about the place of Israel within their educational priorities.

- Leadership should be encouraged to give significant thought to the place of Israel in their school to set the frame for faculty, students and families.
- Create a conversation of educational mission statements that make mission of Israel.

### **Israel Educator Staff Position**

- A designated Israel educator can be particularly effective serving as an Israel “lens” that brings an Israel dimension to all parts of the educational setting, whether helping math teachers to frame word problems using Israeli references or facilitating on-line encounters in the computer lab.

### ***Mifgash***

- Real encounter between Israelis and North Americans is the most effective way of building a connection between the two communities. Make *mifgash* as a standard norm with the intentionality of best practice.

### **Israel Travel**

- Every child should have an Israel experience, ideally multiple experiences, as part of their Jewish educational continuum.

### **Diverse Entry Points**

- Excellent Israel Education enables learners to develop a connection to Israel through a wide spectrum of personally relevant frameworks, including but also transcending the traditional categories of politics and history. (For example, arts and culture, sports, service, STEM -science, technology, engineering and math, etc.) The totality of Israel should be leveraged for the benefit of Israel Education.

## *D. Experiment, Take Risks and Expand Offerings*

### **Entrepreneurship**

- New approaches and ideas need support and venture capital. Incubator initiatives should be encouraged to focus on Israel Education and to weave Israel Education into Jewish Education.

### **Intrapreneurship**

- Tremendous potential exists within existing institutions. In many cases, that potential can be released at a fraction of the cost of starting up a new entity. Seed grant programs that enable organizations to create fresh approaches and to work collaboratively within their own walls and with outside organizations should be developed.

## VI.

## BOLD VISION AND GOALS

In support of the above recommendations, we propose the following six goals. They are bold and would represent significant advancement of the field.

**By 2020:**

- Each bar- and bat-mitzvah student in North America will be able to articulate how Israel is a part of his/her Jewish story.
- 20,000 Jewish teens will travel to Israel each year (approximately double the current number).
- *Mifgash* becomes normative in that a majority of Israeli and North American youth has experienced a meaningful *mifgash* (ideally, more than one).
- There will be 1,000 skilled, certified and employed Israel educators.
- Double the number of Jewish 18 year olds that demonstrate a basic proficiency in Modern Hebrew.
- Every Jewish educator will be able to articulate how Israel is part of her/his Jewish story.

## VII.

## CONCLUSION

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This report comes at a moment in American Jewish life when concern about “drifting apart” is acute. The age of “mythic Israel” has largely ended, and “Israel in all its complexity” is a driving motif in much communal conversation.

At the same time, this is an age when more young Jews have gone to Israel than at any time since the creation of the State. It is a time when creative independent foundations have used their reflection and resources to affect the agenda of Jewish life towards Israel. It is an era when professional organizations led by educators and concerned with Israel Education have emerged.

While there is cause for concern about the future of the relationship between American Jews and Israel, there is also much to inspire hope. Americans and Israelis now see one another as equals and partners. Teens continue to travel to Israel. The Birthright phenomenon is shaping an entire generation of young Jews and has created vast potential for improving Jewish and Israel Education. Israel educators have a language to share, and their field is becoming stronger through certification and ongoing development programs. Key philanthropists have become leaders and drivers of Israel Education, and major Jewish organizations are recognizing that Israel is integral to Jewish Education.

Now is a moment for action. We can build on the progress of the last decade. We can boldly invest in Israel Education and Israel educators. We can inspire our communities with a vision of Israel Education at the heart of vibrant, rich, and learner-centered Jewish Education.

The task is great. The workers are ready. The field is sown. If we put in the effort, if we invest in the field, we will reap the harvest in years to come.

# APPENDICES





## APPENDIX A-1

### ISRAEL THROUGH THE LENS OF AMERICAN JEWISH EDUCATION

ERAS	CONTEXT	IDEOLOGICAL THEMES	EDUCATIONAL FOCI	FRAMEWORKS / PEOPLE
<b>1920's – 1948</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Focus on Becoming American</li> <li>▪ The Dream and Struggle for Palestine</li> <li>▪ From Destruction to Rebirth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching Palestine - the Nascent Dream and Hope</li> <li>▪ A Culturist - Jewish Civilization Perspective</li> <li>▪ Palestine as a Welcoming Refuge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Courses of Study for Supplementary Education</li> <li>▪ The Heroic and Pioneering Effort</li> <li>▪ Music and Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Supplementary Schools</li> <li>▪ Bureaus of Jewish Education</li> <li>▪ Benderly, Kaplan, Dewey</li> <li>▪ Pre-School</li> <li>▪ Camping</li> </ul>
<b>1948 – 1960's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statehood</li> <li>▪ America as Home</li> <li>▪ Eichmann Trial/Holocaust Uncovered</li> <li>▪ Six Day War/Jewish Pride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Protestant-Catholic-Jew”</li> <li>▪ Judaism as a Religion</li> <li>▪ Religion as Denominations</li> <li>▪ Israel, Bible and the Holy Land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Historical Perspective: Biblical Period, Zionist Movement, Statehood</li> <li>▪ Bible, Prayers &amp; Israel</li> <li>▪ A Young Brave Democratic State</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supplementary Religious Schools</li> <li>▪ Denominational Departments of Education</li> <li>▪ Book Publishers as Shapers of Curriculum</li> <li>▪ Israel Teen Travel</li> </ul>
<b>1970's - 1990's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yom Kippur War</li> <li>▪ “Zionism is Racism”</li> <li>▪ Advocacy</li> <li>▪ Gulf War</li> <li>▪ Media as Shaper of Presentation of Israel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kibbutz Galuyot</li> <li>▪ “We are One”</li> <li>▪ Jews in Need</li> <li>▪ Confronting de-legitimization of a Jewish State</li> <li>▪ Self-Defense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing Perspectives</li> <li>▪ Questions and Answers</li> <li>▪ Israel as a Modern Society</li> <li>▪ “We and They”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Media as “Classroom”</li> <li>▪ Units, Modules and Programs</li> <li>▪ Teen Travel for the Affiliated</li> </ul>
<b>2000 – 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Israel Under Attack</li> <li>▪ Israel as a “Start Up Nation”</li> <li>▪ Israel as a Political Issue</li> <li>▪ Birthright Israel</li> <li>▪ Post-Denominational Judaism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocating for Israel</li> <li>▪ Israel's Role in Jewish Identity</li> <li>▪ Emerging Prominence of Experiencing Israel</li> <li>▪ The Emergence of a Field of Israel Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Israel and Jewish Identity</li> <li>▪ <i>Mifgash</i></li> <li>▪ A Contemporary Society - Arts, Culture and High-Tech</li> <li>▪ Security, Terrorism and Survival</li> <li>▪ Diverse Narratives</li> <li>▪ The Search for Core Principles and Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasis on the Post-Adolescent Years</li> <li>▪ Israel Travel for 18 – 26 year olds</li> <li>▪ Foundations and Philanthropies as Agenda Shapers</li> <li>▪ New Frameworks for Israel Education</li> <li>▪ An Emerging Literature on “Israel Education”</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX A-2

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### ISRAEL ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDED SINCE 2001

(Descriptions were taken from each organization's website)

**Israel 21C** is an online news magazine that aims to demonstrate how Israeli efforts have contributed incalculably to the advancement of health-care, environment, technology, culture, and global democratic values worldwide. (2001)

**StandWithUs** is dedicated to informing the public about Israel and to combating the extremism and anti-Semitism that often distorts the issues. (2001)

**Hasbara Fellowships** brings hundreds of students to Israel every summer and winter, giving them the information and tools to return to their campuses as educators about Israel. (2001)

**The David Project** positively shapes campus opinion on Israel by educating, training, and empowering student leaders to be thoughtful, strategic and persuasive advocates. (2002)

**The Israel Project** provides factual information about Israel and the Middle East to press, public officials and the public. (2002)

**Israel on Campus Coalition** focuses its efforts on building strong leaders in the campus community to effectively advocate for Israel and change the campus Israel climate. (2002)

**Caravan for Democracy (JNF)** trains college students to become advocates for Israel by encouraging them to be leaders on their campuses and in their communities. (2002)

**Write On for Israel** is an intensive two-year program that trains a select group of high school students to become advocates for Israel through journalism. (2002)

**North American Coalition for Israel Education – Makom** is a partnership of the Jewish Agency for Israel and Jewish communities around the world. NACIE/Makom seeks to intensify the significance of Israel as a core component of Jewish identity in North America. Makom trains leaders and creates educational content to embrace the vibrant complexity of Israel: The People and the Place. (2003)

**Blue Star** is dedicated to empowering the next generation of Israel advocates and leaders. (2003)

**Israel Up Close** is dedicated to informing and educating people throughout the world about Israel and Israelis. Israel Up Close identifies, researches, and reports on how Israeli innovations improve the daily lives of people throughout the world. (2003)

**Center for Israel Education** writes and disseminates curricula about modern Israel, concentrates on providing resources and teaching materials for university professors, students, and the general public, and offers professional development workshops for teachers across the country. (2007)

**The iCenter** works to advance high-quality, meaningful and innovative Israel Education by serving as the national hub and catalyst for building, shaping and supporting the field. (2008)

**Jerusalem Online University** is a leading online portal for Jewish distance learning that offers a variety of classes taught by a group of prestigious educators and speakers and covers a broad spectrum of political and religious subjects. (2009)

## APPENDIX A-3

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### KEY REPORTS AND SURVEYS

**“A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States”**

Marvin Schick, *AVI CHAI Foundation*, October 2009

**“Defining Israel Education”**

Bethamie Horowitz, *The iCenter*, January 2012

**“High School Israel Experience Programs: A Policy Oriented Analysis of the Field”**

Ezra Kopelowitz, Mina Wolf, Stephen Markowitz, Research Success Technologies Inc. Jerusalem Israel, *The Jewish Agency for Israel*, November 2009

**“Israel Curriculum in North American Jewish Day Schools: A Study of Untapped Transformative Potential”**

Alex Pomson, Howard Deitcher and Daniel Rose, *The iCenter*, April 2009

**“Israel Education in North American Day Schools: A Systems Analysis and Strategies for Change”**

Alex Pomson, Howard Deitcher with Michal Muszkat-Barkam, Naava Frank, Reuben Greenvale, Stephen Markowitz and Pearl Mottelson, *AVI CHAI Foundation*, April 2009

**“Jewish Teen Travel to Israel: Participants, Profiles and Perceptions”**

Elan Ezrachi, *The Jewish Agency for Israel*, September 2011

**“Mapping Israel Education: An Overview of Trends and Issues in North America”**

Karen Abrams Gerber and Aliza Mazor, *Gilo Family Foundation*, Spring 2003

**“Mapping the Field of Teen Israel Travel”**

Ramie Arian, *The iCenter*, August 2011

**“Recent Trends in Supplementary Jewish Education”**

Dr. Jack Wertheimer, *AVI CHAI Foundation*, March 2007

**“Study of North American Participants in High School Age Travel Programs to Israel”**

Elan Ezrachi, *The Jewish Agency for Israel and The iCenter*, November 2011

### **Survey of Israel Studies Programs**

Michael Colson, *Leichtag Family Foundation*, August 2011 – unpublished

### **“What Does Field-Building Mean for Service-Learning Advocates?”**

*Melinda Fine, October 2001*

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMAL SCANS** (carried out by iCenter staff):

- **Community-Based Israel Education Initiatives**
- **Israel Education in Congregational Schools**
- **Hebrew Language Programs in Public High Schools**

## APPENDIX A-4

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### SURVEY INFORMANT LIST

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**Allie Harris** - Hebrew Union College

**Debbie Harris** - Spertus Institute

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**Hannah Rubin-Schlansky** - Hebrew Union College

**Tom Samuels** - Spertus Institute

**Bella Shapiro** - Brandeis

**Alana Tilman** - Jewish Theological Seminar

## APPENDIX A-5

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### ISRAEL EDUCATION GATHERINGS

2010/2011 INCLUDE:

#### **JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL DELEGATION OF NORTH AMERICAN SHLICHIM November 2010 / November 2011**

Workshop of 200 Jewish agency shlichim convened by JAFI, in addition to 3 regional trainings per year.

#### **NATIONAL RAMAH ISRAEL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**

Conference and training session on Israel Education in camp and other informal educational settings, presented by the Ramah Israel Leadership Initiative, which is funded by the Legacy Heritage Fund.

#### **JEWISH STUDENT UNION ISRAEL EDUCATION STAFF TRAINING**

**April 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 / November 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Workshops for JSU staff and advisors aimed at enhancing their knowledge of Israel, and providing them with practical Israel Educational resources to bring into their clubs.

#### **PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL HEBREW LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

**May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Convening of 26 public high school Hebrew teachers from across the country for a day of learning and sharing.

#### **NACCHHS**

**August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Convening of 24 principals of supplementary Hebrew High Schools convened in partnership with JESNA.

#### **TEEN ISRAEL EXPERIENCE CONVENING**

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 / November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Gathering of 32 Teen Israel Experience educators and stakeholders to explore the current landscape and future opportunities around teen Israel travel.

#### **MASTERS CONCENTRATION IN ISRAEL EDUCATION SEMINAR**

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 / Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

Four-day intensives for students in the MA Concentration in Israel Education devoted to exploring core issues in the field of Israel Education.

#### **iCAMP FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION**

**August 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

A 3-day gathering, a festival of innovation and learning of 140 Jewish educators, lay leaders and professionals from across North America.

**MZ TEEN ISRAEL INTERNS**

**September 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Orientation seminar and launch of a national leadership program for 48 teens from across North America returning from summer 2011 Israel experiences.

**ISRAEL EDUCATION WORKSHOP FOR CAMP DIRECTORS AND SENIOR EDUCATORS**

**December 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Inaugural 2-day training of the Goodman Camping Initiative

**ADCA (Association of Directors of Central Agencies) ISRAEL EDUCATION SEMINAR**

**December 7<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Convening in collaboration with JESNA of 22 senior professionals of central bureaus of education to explore the current state of the field and shape new visions in Israel Education for their agencies and communities.

**MIDWEST RABBINIC ASSEMBLY ISRAEL EDUCATION WORKSHOP**

**February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

30 Rabbis from the Conservative Movement participate in a half-day seminar Israel Education

**BBYO MIDWEST ISRAEL SEMINAR**

**March 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

First gathering of 100 BBYO teens for a two-day Israel Education, engagement, and leadership seminar

**MZ TEEN – iCONNECT WITH ISRAEL**

**March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012**

A 3-day gathering for over 100 teens to deepen their knowledge about Israel, build community, enhance leadership skills, and develop a strong voice in support of Israel.

**CENTER FOR ISRAEL EDUCATION (Emory University)**

Summer 2010 / Summer 2011 /Summer 2012

Interactive Israel Education teacher workshops

## APPENDIX A-6

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### HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

#### **Communities**

Community agencies have taken a number of creative approaches to integrating Israel Education. Partnership 2000 has led to expanded possibilities for *mifgashim* and ongoing relationships, which have resulted in ongoing programs. The L.A. / Tel Aviv Partnership, along with the Boston / Haifa connection have invested significantly in high quality twinning and *mifgashim* for children, youth, families, educators and more. In Dallas, “Israel at the Center” is a new initiative designed to bring together educators from 13 cities in Dallas’s P2K region for programming with Israeli educators from their P2K region. In Cleveland and Minneapolis, local Israelis, who are not *sblichim*, work intensively on Israel Education in the community. In Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, the central agencies have begun work to systemically integrate Israel Education into supplementary educational settings.

#### **Camps**

The camp sector has received a good deal of investment in Israel initiatives in recent years. Jewish Agency *sblichim* are an integral part of many camps. Starting in 2009, URJ and Ramah camps received multi-year grants from the Legacy Heritage Foundation to enhance and integrate Israel Education into the daily life of camp. The AVI CHAI Foundation established a series of programs that help JAFI train camp staff to support the camps’ Israel Education programming (B’yachad, Chazon and Shutafim). The Larry and Lillian Goodman Family Foundation has supported JCCA’s Yisrael Sheli curriculum, and more recently, the Goodman Camping Initiative, a partnership of the iCenter and the Foundation for Jewish Camp, aimed primarily at 36 non-affiliated camps.

#### **Synagogues**

Denominations and synagogues incorporate Israel into their communal life in various ways. Non-Orthodox rabbinical schools require a year in Israel for their students, and most Orthodox rabbinical students have generally spent at least one year studying in Israel. Individual synagogues undertake family and teen trips to Israel. Modern Orthodox synagogues may host Bnei Akiva *sblichim* and weave them into the life of the congregation. Synagogues have also begun experimenting with family *mifgashim* using digital communication tools.

## **Day Schools**

Notable developments in day school Israel Education include: BASIS – a systemic approach to integrating Israel into Bay Area Day Schools, Israel clubs, which empower students to serve as peer educators; the presence of *shinshinim* and *shlichim*; the designation of a faculty, or staff member to serve as Israel educator and carry the Israel portfolio; and prioritizing travel to Israel for students and educators.

## **Teen Israel Experience**

Noteworthy initiatives in this area include: Ta'am Yisrael, a project of the Community Foundation for Jewish Education in Chicago, which brings eighth graders on a one-week trip to Israel. The experience primarily targets teens in supplemental congregational schools, and leads to higher rates of return travel to Israel in later years. A second initiative of note is the Diller Teen Fellows of the San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education, a yearlong leadership development program for 11th and 12th graders.

## **Teen Programming**

Major recent initiatives include: the Jewish Student Union, which brings Jewish culture clubs to public high schools and includes Israel as one of its core elements; BBYO, which is incorporating Israel into its programs and professional training; the MZ Teen Israel Internship, administered by the iCenter, which brings together teens from various youth movements after their summer experiences in Israel for a yearlong series of mentoring and leadership development activities; and Write On for Israel, a two-year program for 11th and 12th graders, to develop knowledge and skills related to advocating for Israel through journalism and other activities.

## **Families**

In addition to parents who organize their own Israel frameworks for their children to engage Israel, the most prominent program for family engagement over the last decade has been the PJ Library, partnership between local funders and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. PJ's monthly selections include Israel-oriented books and videos, and the books and accompanying reading guides serve as practical resources for organically integrating Israel into the home.

# APPENDIX A-7

## THE ALEPH BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION

A collection of eleven values, ideas and practices, forming the foundation for excellence in Israel Education

### INTEGRAL TO JEWISH IDENTITY

Israel education is a vital component of the overall identity development and education of our young as Jews and as human beings.

### LEARNER CENTERED

Israel education is both child centered and Israel centered. In an ever-changing world, Israel education is based around what we currently know about the young, their development, their interests, and their world.

### MEDINAT YISRAEL, ERETZ YISRAEL & AM YISRAEL

Israel education encompasses both the contemporary State of Israel and its people, the historic and religious connection to the Land, and the ongoing link between the Land, the State and *Am Yisrael*.

### KNOWLEDGEABLE & PASSIONATE EDUCATORS

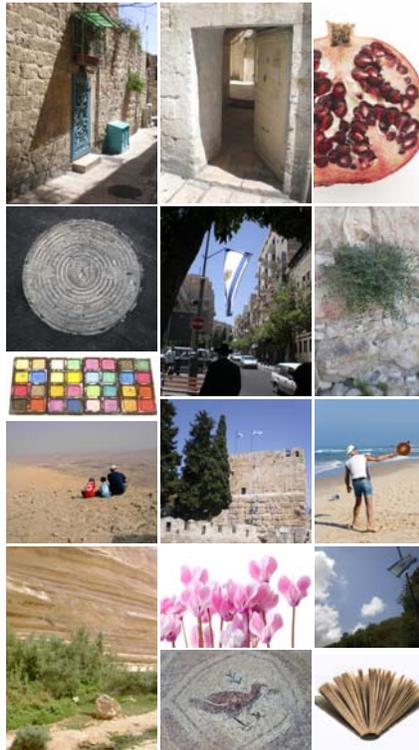
Israel education requires educators who possess a deep commitment to and love for Israel and are able to engender the same love and commitment in their students through broad knowledge and well-honed pedagogic skills.

### MIFGASHIM

Israel education fosters authentic experiences with Israeli peers to deepen both the individual and collective Jewish identities of young people.

### AN EXPERIENCE IN ISRAEL

The personal experiencing of Israel is an indispensable component of a comprehensive Israel education.



### THEMATIC CURRICULUM

Israel education is presented through a thoughtful selection of themes, subjects and values reflecting a meaningful curricular scope and sequence.

### DIVERSE NARRATIVES

Israel education integrates contemporary, historic and religious narratives, as a means to support the development of personal narratives.

### ISRAELI ARTS & CULTURE

Israel education highlights contemporary arts and culture because both of these reflect the heart, soul and vibrancy of Israeli society and have the power to influence and meaningfully engage people.

### IMMERSIVE & INTEGRATED

Israel education takes place as part of a comprehensive 'culture' that encompasses all aspects of the Jewish educational settings in which it takes place.

### MODERN HEBREW

For Israel education, the Hebrew language is an important dimension of Jewish identity development and connection with the modern State of Israel.

THE ALEPH-BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION

[www.theicenter.org](http://www.theicenter.org)



## **ABOUT THE ICENTER**

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### **Vision**

The iCenter envisions generations of young Jews with a meaningful and enduring connection to Israel and the Jewish people.

### **Mission**

The iCenter works to advance excellence and innovation in Israel Education by serving as the national hub and catalyst for building, shaping and supporting the field.

### **Goals**

ESTABLISH and promulgate standards of excellence.

ENHANCE educational leadership and professional development.

DEVELOP and disseminate quality educational resources.

PROMOTE educational entrepreneurship and innovation.

INCREASE commitment to Israel Education among educators, communal leaders and supporters.

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