

REIMAGINING ISRAEL EDUCATION

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Tel Aviv, with a teal graphic overlay consisting of a thick, curved line that loops around the bottom left and right sides of the page. The city buildings are visible in the background, and the overall color palette is dominated by dark blues and teals.

**EDUCATIONAL
FRAMEWORK**

The massacre of October 7, 2023, sent shockwaves through the Jewish people. Its aftermath has had profound consequences for Jewish education. The rifts among stakeholders in Jewish education that have been exposed over the past two years are not entirely new. But the conditions they created make long-needed change imperative

In recent decades, many committed leaders built and advanced the field of Israel education. This field is no longer emerging; learners and educators can participate in a series of creative, relevant, and impactful experiences.

But as a whole, in too many settings and situations, Israel education has been:

- 1 **Implemented in isolation:** A program here, even a semester there, without larger contextualization in a sustained, layered experience.
- 2 **Incomplete:** Focused on the modern state, without rooting its current manifestation in Jewish tradition and history.
- 3 **Overly pliable:** Without roots in peoplehood, Jewish history and Zionism, or deep collaboration with Israeli peers.
- 4 **Overly sentimental:** Driven by emotion and nostalgia more than fidelity to the reality of Israel.
- 5 **Unsafe:** Bounded by the rhetoric of solidarity, unity, and uniformity, often with consequences for those breaking ranks.
- 6 **Misaligned to capacity:** Without support for educators to build learning environments that can hold multiple opinions and learners' active, healthy debate.
- 7 **Embedded in parent-child disconnects:** With children seeking one product and parents demanding another.
- 8 **Misfocused:** Determined by stakeholders as disconnected from the realities of Jewish education and the Jewish youth of today.

In the post-October 7 landscape, these observations become clear and urgent, creating a foundation for change.



והקמתי את-בריתי ביני
וביןך ובין זרעך אחרך
לדרתם לברית עולם להיות
לך לאלוקים ולזרעך אחרך

I will maintain My covenant between
Me and you, and your offspring to
come, as an everlasting covenant
throughout the ages...

ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחרך
את ארץ מגריך את כל-
ארץ כנען לאחזת עולם
והייתי להם לאלוקים

I assign the land you sojourn in to you
and your offspring to come, all the land
of Canaan, as an everlasting holding.

Genesis 17:7-8¹

¹The Contemporary Torah, Jewish Publication Society

The Time is Now

We are working toward a future where
**We are actively, together, building the Israel
and the Jewish people of our dreams.**

This is a new era for the Jewish people. The Jewish education we create, with Israel as an integral component, can and must provide the leadership we need.

These are our commitments.

1

Cumulative:

Israel Education comprises repeated, layered learning across varied intelligences, modes, and moments.

- Learning is not episodic, not a program or a semester, but ongoing.
- Learning is integrated throughout Jewish education; Israel is elevated in תנ"ך (*Tanakh*, Bible), תפילה (*tefilah*, prayer), history, culture, language, and more.
- Learning supports engagement through emotion and action, but must also elevate intellectual understanding of and about Israel.
- Learning features Israel repeatedly, across multiple institutions.

2

Complex:

Israel Education invites learners into the many faces of Israel.

- Educators have the confidence and competence to teach diverse and potentially challenging subject matter.
- Educators are trained to construct conversations that offer options for individual learner meaning-making within the larger community.
- Educators are supported in facilitating conversations that foster mutual learning and respectful disagreement.
- Educational organizations support Israel without mandating uniformity from learners and families.
- Speakers, educators, and stories are featured that communicate the diversity of Israelis, Jewish and Arab alike.

4

Collaborative:

The first-hand experience of Israelis shapes diaspora-based learning.

- Learning is deeply informed by Israelis' understandings of themselves, their commitments, and their experiences as Israeli citizens.
- Learning supports learners in becoming sacred עדים (*edim*, witnesses) to the experiences of Israelis in Israel.
- Learning is frequently co-created with Israelis.
- Educational organizations actively include Israelis (from within and outside Israel) in leadership positions.



5

Courageous:

Israel education acknowledges the pressures and challenges inherent to Israel education today.

- Educators can work around and despite stakeholders' expectations.
- Educators support learners in addressing their social vulnerabilities and risks.
- Israel education makes space for grief and for joy.

3

Constructivist:

Israel Education centers learners.

- Educators facilitate learners' exploration; teaching invites inquiry and co-creation of meaning.
- Learning supports learners' sustained, fluid, and resilient relationships with Israel.
- Stakeholders in and observers of Jewish education privilege learners' voices, even if it feels threatening.
- Israel education helps learners make meaning of the stories of the Jewish people.



6

Continuous:

Learners have ample opportunity to deepen, shift, iterate, and mature their relationships with Israel over time.

- Learners encounter Israel at all ages.
- Learners experience Israel in Israel, repeatedly.
- Learners' formative experiences are intertwined with Israel.

8

Covenantal:

Learners confront the obligations central to Jewish tradition.

- Learners become committed citizens of the Jewish people: contributors, not just members, taking action to better Israel and the Jewish people.
- Sacred Jewish texts and ideas inform learners' understanding of Israel.
- Learners are comfortable with Hebrew as the language of their people.
- Learners consider their roles within a global Jewish community in which responsibility for Israel is both collective and differently lived.
- Israel inspires and enriches learners' Jewish spiritual practice; for some, it is the fulfillment of God's promise.

9

Connected:

Learners are in active, sustained dialogue and relationship with peer Israelis—Jews and non-Jews—and global Jewry.

- Learners know Israelis and Jews around the world as educators, peers, and friends, with whom they can both find affinity and respectfully disagree.
- Learners experience Israel firsthand (travel to Israel is accessible, plentiful, and affordable).
- Learners regularly encounter Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic experiences through learning, dialogue, and evidence.
- The unique needs and perspectives of non-Jewish learners, particularly non-Jewish parents of Jewish children, are recognized and supported as learners to connect meaningfully to Israel.
- Learners internalize the stories of Israelis, incorporating them into their commitment to Israel.

7

Contrasting:

Learners experience Israel education as fundamentally diverse and contrasting.

- Learners critically engage with Zionisms as expressions of the self-determination of the Jewish people in our ancestral homeland.
- Learners encounter Israel's diversity: of religions (in Israel), class, race, Jewish observances, political leanings, Zionisms, and more.
- As part of their experiences, learners are supported in understanding and holding "אלו ואלו" ("eilu v'eilu," or multiple ideas) as true.²



10

Curious and Caring:

Learners' experiences open them up to possibility, including critique and growth.

- Learning engages learners in their responsibility to one another.
- חסד (*chesed*, compassion) and דין (*din*, judgment)—curious, respectful agreement and disagreement—characterize learners' experiences.
- Learners explore and test critical ideas as a natural, safe part of Jewish education.

² The idea that "these and those are the words of the living God," or *eilu v'eilu divrei Elohim chaim*," is from Eruvin 13b, Babylonian Talmud.

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Titles reflect positions held during their work with the Reimagining initiative.

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Reimagining Israel Education is an initiative of The Jewish Education Project, in partnership with the Jim Joseph Foundation and Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. The initiative surveyed more than 400 stakeholders and engaged thought leaders, researchers, Jewish educators and learners to produce a landscape analysis and develop a new educational framework to advance Israel education post-October 7, 2023. This framework emerged from the field-wide process and reflects broad collaboration. We share it with gratitude to many partners.