

Applying My Aspirations Playbook to Unit Planning



**M.A.P. FOR JEWISH
LEARNING & LIVING**

This session includes a lot of time for teachers to work directly with the aspirations from [My Aspirations Playbook \(MAP\)](#). The teachers will get a chance to see how the aspirations can affect their teaching in concrete ways. The session is constructed so that teams of teachers can support each other.

As the Educational Director, you will have a chance to hear from teachers about their concerns as well as their creative ideas. Collect their ideas, and later share them back with the group accompanied by your responses. This approach gives you time to consider which concerns are shared and how to address them as well as a chance to review the positive responses and raise them up for the group as examples. Finally, the teacher responses could be used to plan an additional session as needed.

Note: This lesson is based on content that emerges from the session entitled, [Identifying Our Top Priorities](#). Please be sure to complete that session before this one.

Goal

Teachers will plan learning as well as class routines, communication, and other aspects of classroom culture around an aspiration from MAP and identify areas where they need additional support.

Materials

- Copies of [MAP](#)
- Top priorities from [Identifying Our Top Priorities](#) (choose one to focus on for this session)
- Paper and pencil
- Butcher paper and markers (optional magazines, scissors, glue)
- Unit template (included below)
- Sticky notes

Plan

Introduction (10 minutes)

Ask teachers to share thoughts or questions since the last meeting. Make note of them, and plan to respond to concerns later, either with the whole group or one-on-one.

Explain that specific aspirations can influence not just learning activities but also elements of classroom culture. Discuss: What are some ways we could share these aspirations with students?

For example, consider:

- Could we write goals that lead to these aspirations in student-friendly language to be posted in the classroom?
- What kind of activity could we do with students for them to generate or rank the aspirations or overarching categories?
- In what ways could we integrate the students' own aspirations?

Teachers can respond to these questions on their own or in pairs. They should write down their ideas and submit them for you to compile and share later.

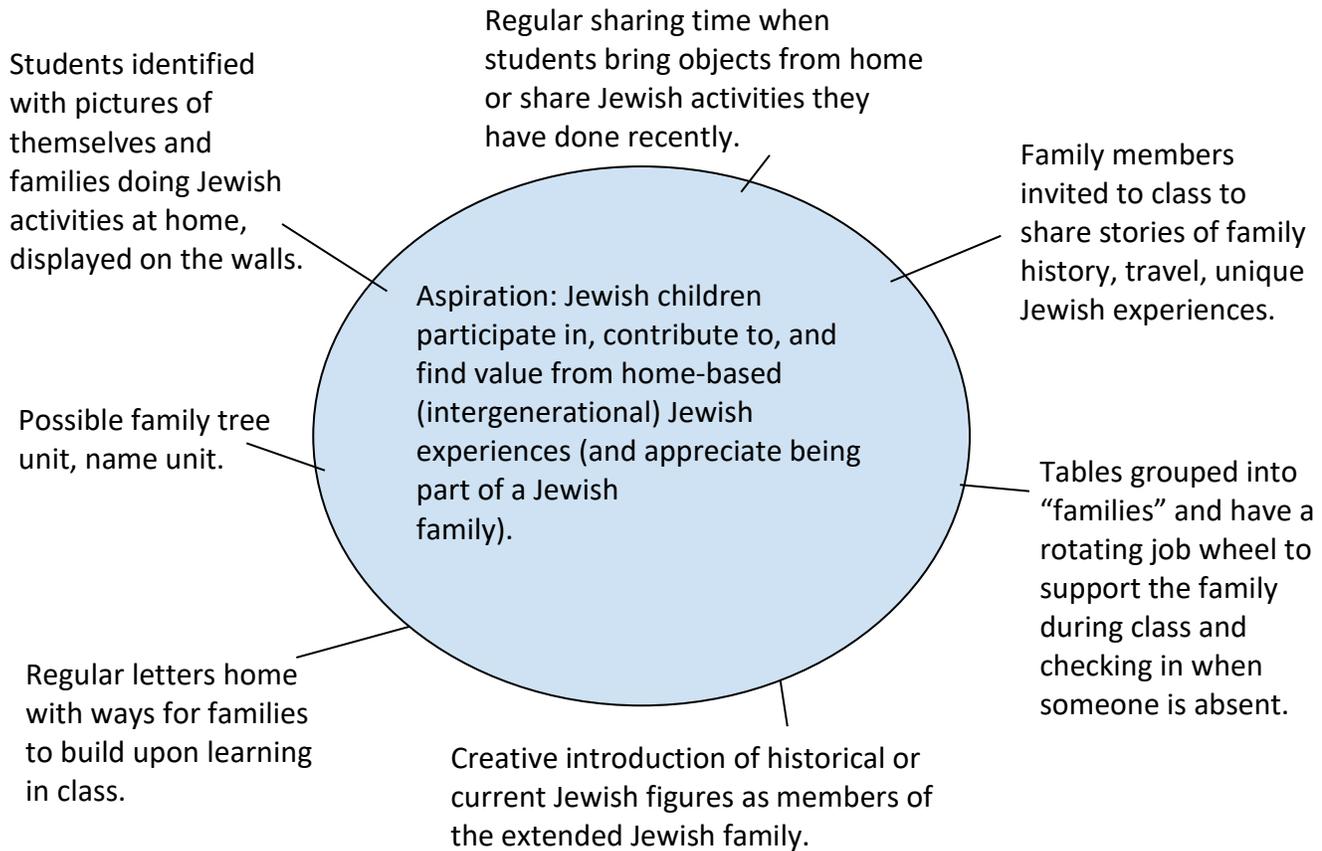
Activities

Class Vision Board (15 minutes)

Post the aspiration you have chosen for this session. Divide the teachers into groups of 4-5, and give each group a piece of butcher paper and markers. Task the groups with designing a classroom culture around the aspiration. They can write a list or use symbols to represent different components of the classroom culture. Each group should include at least 4 of the following and any others they determine relevant:

- Class routines
- Parent communication (things sent home about class)
- Consequences/incentives
- Decorations
- Furniture placement
- Absentee procedures

A sample is below. If desired, this can be done with collage materials as well. Magazine images might inspire teachers to think creatively about the goal.



For the last 5 minutes, each group should trade papers with another group and discuss what they see-- similarities, differences, ideas they like or would change.

Unit Planning (15 minutes)

Teachers should get into groups by grade, if possible, for this activity. Using the Unit Planning Template (below) or another, teachers should plan a unit aligned to a key aspiration. A sample completed template is below. (Remember, this is a planning document, only the first step in creating a full-fledged unit). The evidence of understanding is what the students are working towards, a demonstration of learning that culminates at the end of the unit. You can choose a topic that is relevant to your school or calendar. Alternatively, some suggestions are below:

- High Holy Days (if the aspirations are to be implemented in the coming year)
- Israel (a large topic that would be taught differently depending on the aspirations chosen; also related to many of the framework aspirations)
- Sh'ma (or any particular prayer; another option is a section of the service)
- Passover and/or the Exodus from Egypt
- Tzedek (or another value)

For the last 5 minutes, each group should switch papers with another group or check their own work by considering the following questions: Do the unit goals and the learning activities align to the framework aspiration? How might you change or add to the plan to increase the alignment?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Ask groups to hand in their work so that you can share it. Compile all of the ideas from the session to share back with the group after the session.

Give everyone a sticky note and ask them to write the answer to one of the following questions:

1. In order to implement this framework aspirations approach, what additional support or help might you need?
2. What word would you use to describe how you are feeling about the framework aspirations vis-a-vis your teaching?

As teachers finish, they can post the notes on a piece of butcher paper. Take a picture of the butcher paper and share it with the rest of the notes from today's session, with follow up resources as necessary.

Unit Planning Template

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|---|--|
| Grade, Teachers | |
| Framework Aspiration | |
| Unit Goals (concrete learning goals that lead to the aspiration) | |
| Evidence of Understanding (a demonstration of learning) | |
| Learning activities: Day 1 | |
| Learning activities: Day 2 | |
| Learning activities: Day 3 | |
| Learning activities: Day 4 | |
| Learning activities: Day 5 | |
| Special materials or planning needed | |
| Reflection/Notes | |

Sample Completed Unit Planning Template

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|--|---|
| Grade, Teachers | 6th, Grinberg |
| Framework Aspiration | Jewish children become familiar with Jewish texts, rituals, language, and history to discover the personal relevance of our inherited tradition. |
| Unit Goals (concrete learning goals that lead to the aspiration) | Students become familiar with Jewish life cycle rituals and their evolution. Students reflect on the relevance of Jewish traditions surrounding life cycle events. |
| Evidence of Understanding (a demonstration of learning) | Students create a relevant and meaningful Jewish naming ceremony for a 12-13 year old using Jewish texts and traditions in a new way. |
| Learning activities: Day 1 | Introduction to Jewish life cycle events. Pairs research different ceremonies (naming, brit milah, bar and bat mitzvah, newer adaptations and creations using mikvah, etc.) for life cycle traditions and identify key elements, symbols, rituals, and texts. |
| Learning activities: Day 2 | Each group presents back, common elements discussed and expanded. |
| Learning activities: Day 3 | Introduce final project for a naming ceremony. Discussion of developmental appropriateness for affirming chosen name or choosing a new one. |
| Learning activities: Day 4 | Exploration of Jewish texts about names, researching names and their origins, researching famous people, historical figures with the same names. |
| Learning activities: Day 5 | Class creation of a naming ceremony for early adolescents, incorporating personal feelings and family dynamics as well as Jewish history, ritual, traditions, and new traditions. |
| Special materials or planning needed | Stories from people in the community who have changed their names could be interesting. Letter home to parents about the project. Internet access. Connections to organizations in the community that facilitate new rituals? |
| Reflection/Notes | <i>To be completed during and after the unit</i> |