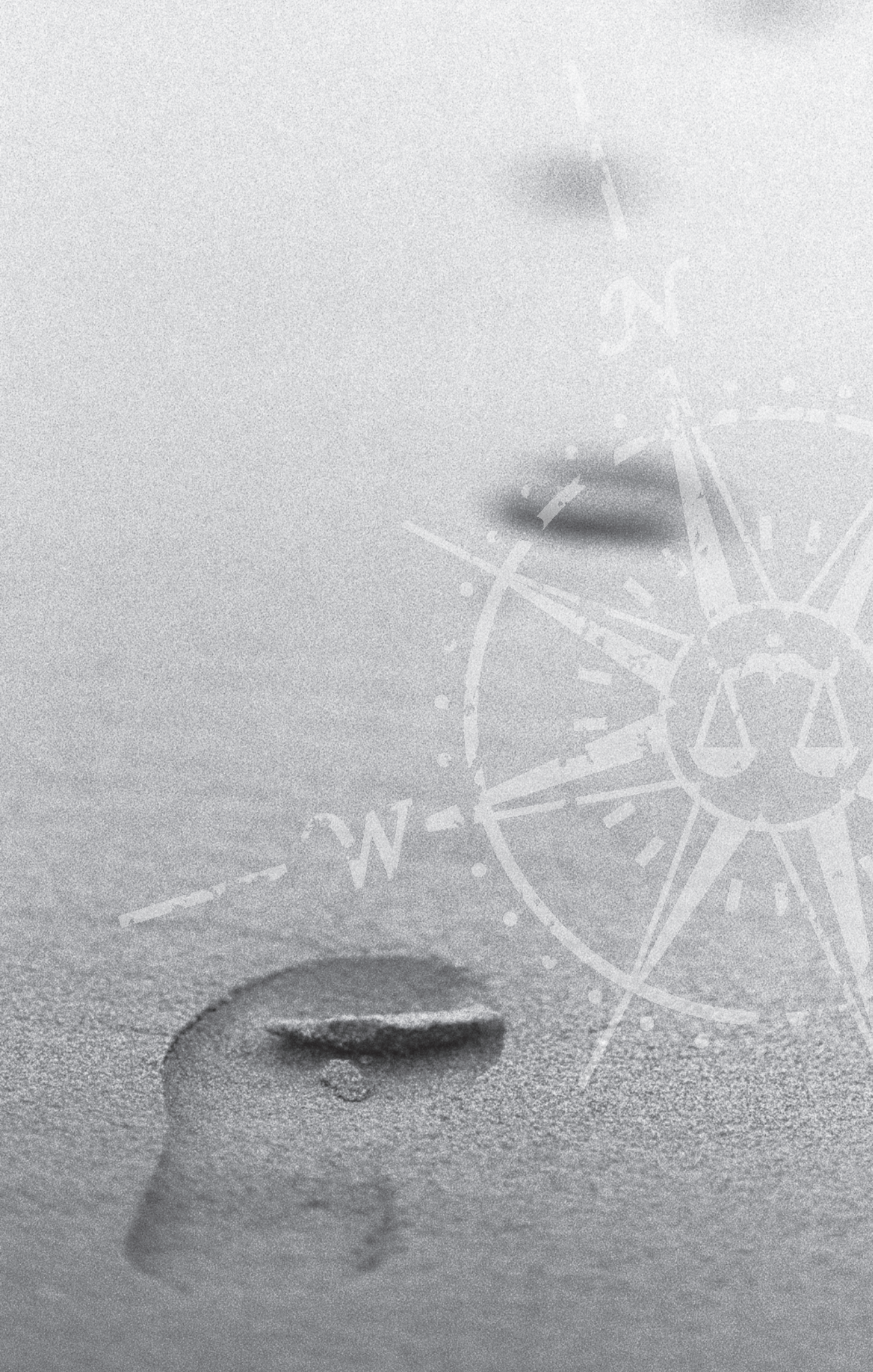




THE LEADER'S COMPASS

Journeying with Vision, Wisdom & Focus

A PEJE PUBLICATION



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Shalom Friends,

“Give me a fixed point and I will move the earth,” the ancient mathematician Archimedes is said to have proclaimed. Titling this collection *The Leader’s Compass* reflects our intention that the thoughts collected here are virtual “fixed points” from which day school leaders can, in many different ways, change the course of their schools. The Hebrew word for compass, *matzpen*, contains within it the root of the word “north.” Knowing one direction, you can deduce all the others.

Identifying “north” or the “fixed point” along one’s journey is an apt metaphor for the way PEJE has emerged from our strategic planning process. Based on our 12 years of work with diverse day schools across North America, we have identified professional leadership, board governance, and financial sustainability as the three levers that will transform the day school field. PEJE is about making day schools irresistible, believing that day schools are essential to fostering an engaged Jewish people for an enduring Jewish future. These three levers are PEJE’s fixed points toward that vision.

As we introduce our new organizational framework, we want our message to the day school field to convey value and deliver hands-on knowledge. We asked a broad group of influential thinkers and practitioners — from both within and beyond the day school field — to respond to 12 provocative quotations. Following the model of a traditional Jewish publication, the pages before you surround a central text with varied interpretations.

PEJE is embracing our mission with excitement, focus, and commitment. We look forward to continuing to work with you in partnership as you set your school’s direction and steer it toward your vision. The PEJE resources listed at the back of this publication can support you in that effort.

With best wishes,



Rabbi Josh Elkin, Ed.D.

Executive Director

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Using The Leader's Compass

This publication has been designed specifically for leaders in the day school field — in particular, heads of school, board chairs, and development professionals. We hope that engaging with the core texts and the perspectives of the respondents will stimulate your thinking and offer new ways of understanding the challenges of leadership, governance, and financial sustainability.

SOME WAYS TO ENGAGE MORE DEEPLY WITH *THE LEADER'S COMPASS*:

- Keep it with your pre-meeting materials. If you arrive early, take a moment to peruse one quote and/or perspective.
- Commit to reading one page a week and make dated notes of your impressions. Revisit the pages on a regular basis and add to your impressions.
- Begin a board meeting by asking two or three board members to add their own voices to a particular quote and set of responses.
- When a particular quote resonates with you, find the bibliographic reference at the back of this book, and read the article or book in its entirety.
- Start your next staff meeting with a discussion of one of these pages.
- Share a quote or perspective with a potential or current donor.
- Think about how the photographs reflect a value conveyed in the text.
- Write your own caption under each photograph.
- Comment on a quote or perspective in a posting to a PEJE Community of Practice discussion group or on the PEJE blog.
- Ask your professional coach what he or she thinks about one idea from the publication.

Implicit in Collins' notion is that effective leadership is about behavior, not title or position. This idea is reflected in the Hebrew word for leadership, *manbigut*, which derives from the root meaning behavior. When Collins describes getting the right people on the bus and in the key seats, “not the other way around,” he reflects the view that real leadership emanates not from where one sits in the organizational chart, but from how one behaves in the context of the organization. The challenge is to find people with the intellect, attitude, and values to grow the enterprise. Worry less about filling a particular job description and more about finding individuals of character and competence who are fully aligned with the vision.

This obligation to get the right people on the bus is particularly important for the development of leadership succession. Too often organizations have a tendency to wait until the “eleventh” hour to find the next leader. Getting the right people on the bus is an ongoing process. Nurturing and training the next generation must be an organic component of the organization, and a priority of the incumbent leader.

When confronted with the unconventional leadership styles of Eldad and Medad (Numbers 11), Moses understood that the task of the truly effective leader is to empower the “right people,” regardless of what seats they may have occupied previously. “Are you wrought up on my account? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord put His spirit upon them!” Making a concerted effort to get and keep the right people on the bus will always redound to the long-term benefit of the organization, even when the “seats” change and the needs morph. — *Hal M. Lewis*

The metaphor of the bus reminds us that every initiative, from a loose association to a large organization, is just a vehicle for achieving a vision. This is a special challenge for established institutions that have invested in whole fleets of buses. But what happens when the terrain changes, not to mention our transportation options?

The “right people” are those who are committed not only to the broader vision but also to agreed outcomes that serve the vision. But they must be free to rebuild the engine, change the fuel, redesign or rip out the seats, replace the tires, even retire the bus if it no longer can make the journey. And they must not lose sight of the values that the bus represents: pooling resources, bringing affordable service to far-flung populations, delegating authority and responsibility to a licensed driver. At the same time, the “wrong people” may not themselves be wrong for the vision; rather, they simply may not be the right people for the specific outcomes our metaphorical bus is designed to deliver. They might use airplanes, cars, bicycles, wheelchairs, or their own feet to reach their destination. And they just might get there first. — *Shawn Landres*

“Do whatever you can to get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people into the right seats. . . . Greatness flows first and foremost from having the right people in the key seats, not the other way around.”

Good to Great and the Social Sectors,
Jim Collins

Three truths come to mind along with many questions. First, getting the right people on the bus is possible only when you have the right person driving the bus. How can we find top professionals who have that wonderful, paradoxical combination of humility and personal drive that defines a leader? How do we find the resources to hire and retain the most competent leaders — the ones who make other people look good, reflect integrity and kindness, and have the strength to stay positive in

the toughest of times?

Second, executives need to build a cadre of talented, outstanding staff and board members. How can a school tolerate poor choices for positions? That means saying goodbye to people who aren’t appropriate for the position. A good leader knows how to end a person’s job while honoring that person’s self-respect. As Maimonides said, “One must not say one thing and mean another, but like heart like face.”

Third, leaders ask others to drive the bus occasionally and then gradually turn over the wheel. The professional Jewish world has been accused of doing a terrible job of leadership succession. How might we overcome that accusation? How might we create great workplaces where young people are eager to work, contribute, and succeed? — *Marjory Kaplan*



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Respondents

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BRUCE POWELL, PHD, is Head of School at the New Community Jewish High School in West Hills, California.

YOSSI PRAGER, the North American Executive Director of The AVI CHAI Foundation since 1994, practiced law at Debevoise & Plimpton in Manhattan before joining AVI CHAI. In addition to his work at AVI CHAI, Yossi is on the executive board of his children's day school, serves on the Steering Committee for the Orthodox Forum, and sits as a dayan for the Beth Din of America.

RAE RINGEL, PCC, is the President of The Ringel Group LLC, an executive coaching and leadership training firm in Washington, D.C. She works with nonprofit organizations, Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and entrepreneurial start-ups.

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LEN SCHLESINGER has been President of Babson College since July 2008. His earlier career has spanned a blend of small and large businesses (Au Bon Pain, Inc and Limited Brands) and university teaching and administration (Brown University and Harvard Business School).

EVAN SCHLESSINGER, a Jewish lay leader living in Los Angeles, is the former Board Chair of the Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund and JFL Media. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the Jewish Funders Network and as a trustee on the Los Angeles Jewish Community Foundation.

PAUL SHAVIV is in his twelfth year as Director of Education at TanenbaumCHAT High School in Toronto, Canada. Originally from the United Kingdom, he has worked in formal and informal Jewish education and Jewish affairs for almost 40 years, on four continents. He is currently preparing for publication a book on *Leadership, Management and Operations in the Jewish High School*, which should be out in 2009.

SCOTT SHAY, Chair of Signature Bank, is the author of *Getting Our Groove Back; How to Energize American Jewry*. His most recent area of focus is "Chai Mitzvah," an initiative to promote Bar/Bat Mitzvah renewal every 18 years.

ROBERT SULKIN, President of the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle, is a board member of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and active in Hope for Heroism (an organization dedicated to helping Israeli soldiers injured in combat).

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ANDREA WASSERMAN, former Director for Institutional Advancement at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, has just begun her new job as the Director of Development at BBYO.

ARNEE WINSHALL is the Founding Chair of JCDS, Boston's Jewish Community Day School and *Hebrew at the Center*. She is also a Vice President of JESNA, Chair of the Lippman-Kanfer Institute, and Chair of the Board of Directors of RAVSAK, The Jewish Community Day School Network.

DR. JONATHAN S. WOOCHEER is Chief Ideas Officer and Director of the Lippman Kanfer Institute of JESNA.

PEJE Resources

PEJE has assembled the thoughts and diverse perspectives contained in *The Leader's Compass* in order to stimulate day school leaders to draw inspiration and practical advice from existing resources. This process is modeled in a number of initiatives that PEJE provides to the day school field.

LEADERSHIP LINE

Your most important questions about leadership, governance, and financial sustainability deserve attention from experienced consultants. Contact the Leadership Line at leadershipline@peje.org to schedule a complementary one-hour telephone consultation. You'll gain fresh perspectives and new approaches.

RESOURCE REFERRAL

When school professionals and board members need help, PEJE has resources to share. Contacting info@peje.org or visiting www.peje.org will connect you with experts, websites, documents, and best practices on a wide range of topics.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICES

What social networking sites have taught us is that sometimes the best answer comes from someone just like you. Through PEJE Communities of Practice in the areas of leadership (for heads of school and board chairs), development, financial management, and admission, participants learn from their peers—as well as experts—via regular web-based conference calls and active online discussions.

CONFERENCES

Nothing can replace the value of in-person, hands-on learning opportunities. PEJE sponsors conferences across North America with leading experts from within and beyond the day school field. Each conference is carefully structured to maximize precious professional development resources and to make sure that the learning extends beyond the event itself, through strategies like coaching and mentoring.

LEADERSHIP TOOLS

Instinct can only take a leader so far. Replace anecdotes with quantitative information using data products from the PEJE Day School Peer Yardstick® Suite of Tools, including the Strategic Financial Modeling Tool, the Admission Tracker, the Benchmark Report, and the Day School Parent Survey. PEJE also partners with leading non-profit organizations to customize and make available tools such as the NAIS Board Self-Assessment Tool and Head Evaluation Tool. With the Grinspoon Foundation we developed the Board Excellence Measurement Tool (BEMT) to address how boards measure their own effectiveness.

About PEJE

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION (PEJE) believes that day schools are essential for fostering an engaged Jewish people for an enduring future.

With over twelve years of experience and expertise leading the diverse day school field, we focus on three critical levers: professional leadership, board governance, and financial sustainability. Our strategic initiatives in these areas take place at the local, regional, and national levels.

PEJE's work with major stakeholders in the Jewish community extends across denominations to leaders from day schools, day school networks, federations, foundations, and central educational agencies. We use knowledge, research, and advocacy to advance interest in and support of day school as an exemplary and affordable educational option.

By catalyzing Jewish day schools to become the pinnacle of inspired, inspiring, and sought-after education, we ensure lasting connections to Jewish heritage and the Jewish people.

The work of PEJE across North America is made possible by the support of a partnership of visionary philanthropists and foundations.