

# Who Will Teach Our Children?

## A Hiring Guide for Education Directors and School Committees



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So you need to hire a teacher for your school? The hiring process can be quite challenging – finding just the right teacher for that special class of students. This guide was designed to help you in your search and interview process.

It will provide information to help you:

- Define the teaching position to be filled
- Locate potential teachers
- Design an application that will provide meaningful information
- Ask good interview questions that will give you insight into the potential candidate
- Bring your new teacher on board and help him or her make a smooth transition to your school

This guide also includes some sample documents that you can adapt for your particular school setting or that you can use as a guide to design your own.

- Position Application
- Interview Worksheet
- Teacher's Contract

Many schools in our area follow the Greater Philadelphia Area Supplementary School Salary Scale. This schedule is updated each spring. To receive the most up-to-date schedule, please contact Rochelle Rabeeya at Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education at 215-635-8940, ext. 1202 or

[rrabeeya@acaje.org](mailto:rrabeeya@acaje.org).

One last note...there are many potential legal situations that may arise during the hiring process. This guide is not an attempt to offer legal advice concerning hiring practices. For more information, please turn to page 5 of this guide.

For your convenience, you may download the sample documents found at the back of this guide. Please go to [www.acaje.org](http://www.acaje.org) in the Recruitment section if you would like the sample documents in electronic form. This way you can modify them to meet the specific needs of your school.

Recruiting and hiring the best possible teacher are important steps toward making certain that every Jewish child in our supplementary school system will have a knowledgeable and committed teacher in his or her classroom.

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## Define the Position to be Filled

### The Job Description

- What is the age level of the class?
- What is the size of the class?
- What subject areas will need to be covered? In what kind of depth?
- When and where will the class meet?
- What additional responsibilities need coverage (assemblies, service leading, art, music, etc.)?
- What non-school time activities will the teacher be involved in (Shabbat dinners, family education programs, etc)?

### The School

- What is the school's policy on hiring synagogue members?
- Does the school have minimum education or certification standards?
- How important/desirable is a teacher's same movement affiliation to your school?
- How much previous teaching experience is desirable? Secular School? Jewish School?
- Is the school willing/able to work with an inexperienced teacher?

### The Class

- What is the class's ability level?
- Are there students with special needs in the class?
- What is the class's "personality?"

### Teacher Support

- Supervision
- Evaluation procedures
- Mentoring
- On-going professional development
- Workshops and In-service

## Recruit Everywhere

- Ask current faculty members for recommendations
- Synagogue staff members and lay leaders
- Synagogue members (if this is permitted)
- Synagogue bulletins or newsletters
- Local Central Agency for Jewish Education or Bureau of Jewish Education
- School Directors of area synagogues. Is it possible to "share" teachers, recommendations, etc.?
- Jewish summer camps
- Jewish Community Centers
- Local Jewish newspaper
- Local University or College (School of Education, Judaic Studies Department, Career Placement Office, or Hillel)
- Jewish Adult Education programs or Jewish-oriented secular adult education programs
- Local secular school
- Local secular newspaper

## Use an Application (in addition to a resume)

### Why use an application?

- Pre-screen candidates
- Save time during the interview
- Put an applicant at ease by clarifying important qualifications
- Begin a permanent record for a future employee
- Ensure that the same base-line information is gathered for each applicant
- Ensure the applicant is aware of the responsibility to provide accurate and truthful information

### What should an application include?

- Candidate name
- Address

- Home phone number
- Email
- Full-time Occupation
- Employment History
- Business phone number (Is it acceptable to reach the candidate there?)
- Educational background: secular and religious, formal and informal, adult education
- Experience related to teaching
- Teaching certifications: secular and Jewish
- Movement and/or synagogue affiliation
- Skills, talents and hobbies
- Israel, camping or youth group

experiences

- Preferences: grade, age, curriculum or subject areas
- References: personal and/or professional (Permission to contact references)
- Signature and statements of legal responsibility for truth and accuracy

### What should an application NOT include?

- age or birthdate
- marital or family status
- marital plans
- race, national origin or citizenship
- anything else that might be viewed as discriminatory

## Interviewing

### Purposes of the Interview

- Establish a friendly relationship with a potential teacher
- Gather information about a candidate
- Provide a realistic picture of the position available, job description
- Give the candidate the opportunity to learn about your school

### Interviewing Guide

- Try not to make a decision at the initial interview
- Use standard questions for each interviewee
- Record answers so that you can compare candidates (Interview Worksheet)
- Use the application to avoid asking repetitive questions
- Balance the conversation, allowing the candidate sufficient opportunity to speak

### Interview Etiquette

- Set a friendly and relaxed tone
- Prepare for the interview by reviewing the application or resume
- Avoid interruptions
- Ask the same basic questions of each candidate to be fair to all candidates

## Potential Interview Questions

- What was your most positive memory of religious school or day school? Why do you think it made such an impact on you?
- What was your most negative memory of religious school or day school? How did it affect you?
- What was your most positive or successful teaching experience? Why do you think it went so well?
- What was your most negative memory or experience teaching religious school? How did you handle it? What would you do differently next time?
- Why do you believe Jewish children should attend religious school?
- Why do you want to teach in a Jewish school?
- Describe your vision of an ideal classroom or classroom experience.
- What educational techniques do you prefer to use and how do you plan to use these techniques in your lessons?
- Describe how you would teach the subject matter for this class (for the particular position you have available).
- Based on the subject matter for this class, what do you consider the most important skills, knowledge and attitudes your student should acquire?
- How would you go about teaching a subject with which you might have limited familiarity?
- Tell me about a great teacher you had. Is there a teacher you hope to emulate? In what ways?
- Describe a significant Jewish experience that you have had.
- What is it about Judaism that most excites you?
- With what Jewish issues or questions do you wrestle? What concerns you most?
- What's your favorite part of the Torah and why?
- How do you feel that God should be spoken about in religious school?
- Describe how you might help a student to have a meaningful prayer or worship experience.
- What kind of support do you think you will want or need from your Educational Director?
- What kinds of feedback are most helpful to you? What kinds are least helpful?
- If resources were available for you to take a course in education or Judaica, what subject area would you consider studying?
- What role do you believe a teacher should take in a classroom?
- What strategies have you found effective in managing difficult children? Gifted children? Children with learning differences?
- What questions do you have about our school? Our students? Our parents? Our curriculum?
- Are you interested in the position that has been described? What do you think will be the easiest part of the job? What do you think might be the most challenging?
- Is there anything I didn't ask you that I should have asked you?
- What questions would you like to ask me?

## Be Careful with Your Questions

You may not ask questions which reveal a candidate's race, color, disability, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, or age. There are many potential legal situations that may arise during the hiring process. This guide is not an attempt to offer legal advice concerning hiring practices. Should any questions or concerns arise, please consult a qualified legal representative for specific information in your state or municipality.

Because your school is a religious institution, you are generally allowed to ask questions about the applicant's religion and religious practices if the person's religious practice directly impacts on the specific position for which s/he is being considered and if the same questions are asked of all applicants.

Each movement has its own position on the issue of sexual orientation. It is best to check with your movement, your school leadership and any applicable local, state or federal rulings concerning discrimination based on sexual orientation before you begin your hiring process.

### Acceptable Questions

- Have you ever used another name? (assumed name or nick-name that would enable us to check on your work or education record)
- What is your place of residence?
- If you are hired, can you show proof of age?
- Are you over 18 years of age?
- If under 18, can you, after employment, submit a work permit?
- Can you, after employment, submit verification of your legal right to work in the United States?
- What languages do you speak, read or write (if the use of a language other than English is relevant to the job)?
- Can you perform (a specific, job-related task)?
- If hired, are you willing to take a job-related physical examination?
- If hired, are you willing to submit a photograph of yourself?
- Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
- What is the name and address/phone number of the person we should contact in case of emergency?

### Unacceptable Questions

- What is your maiden name?
- Do you plan to get married? Have children?
- Do you rent or own your home?
- How old are you? When is your birthday?
- When did you attend or complete elementary or high school?
- Are you a United States citizen? Are your family members citizens?
- What is your native language?
- How tall are you? How much do you weigh?
- Do you have any physical or mental disabilities or handicaps?
- (Before hiring) Do you have work papers or proof of citizenship?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Have you ever served in a foreign military?
- What organizations, clubs, societies or lodges do you belong to?
- What is your relationship to your emergency contact?
- How will you arrange child care?

### Criminal Record Check/Child Abuse History Clearance

Applicants should provide criminal and child abuse background checks before they are hired. Some applicants will provide the certifications when they arrive for their interview. Some applicants may need you to provide the appropriate application forms to receive certification. Forms can be obtained from your State Police and your local Department of Public Welfare. Hiring should be provisional until clearances are received. These checks and clearances should be updated every other year.

## Hire...or not?

### Check References

#### Ask the following types of questions...

- How long have you known the candidate and in what capacity?
- What is his/her greatest strength as a teacher?
- In what areas does he/she need to grow as a teacher?
- How does he/she work with colleagues? Administrators? Parents?

### Offer the Position

- Be warm and friendly in offering the position.
- Be specific with class assignment, curriculum information, staff meeting and conference requirements, and expectations.
- Be clear when explaining the salary and benefits and how the teacher can move up on the salary scale (increased education, experience, etc.). Explain the teacher contract.
- Be helpful in integrating and orienting the new teacher to your school.

- Provide a school calendar, texts or other teaching materials, tour of facility, faculty handbook or personnel policy manual and introductions to other staff and faculty members.

#### If you do not offer the position

- Inform the candidates that you choose not to hire in a timely manner.
- Keep application/resume on file for future reference.
- Ask if the candidate would be interested in being added to the list of possible substitutes .

# Sample Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone – Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Subject areas in which you have experience or are comfortable teaching

- Hebrew, Tefillah       Hebrew, Conversation       History       Holidays       Life Cycle
- Prayer       Bible       Israel       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Special skills

- Art       Music       Special Education       Torah Cantillation
- Computers       Librarian       Hebrew Tutoring       Youth Advisor
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Grades (in order of preference):     Pre K     K – 2     3 – 6     7 – 9     10 – 12

Availability       Sunday mornings     Afternoons: M T W Th     Evenings: M T W Th

### Education

**Secular:** Please List Name of School and Degree Earned

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Bachelors Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Masters Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

PhD/Doctorate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Jewish:** Please List Name of School and Degree Earned

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Bachelors Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Masters Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

PhD/Doctorate/Ordination: \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Employment**

Please list Name of School or Business, Phone number, Dates of employment, Position, Contact Person

Secular: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Jewish: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Teaching Experience**

(Start with the most recent, attach additional pages or resume as necessary)

Please list Name of School, Phone number, Dates of employment, Position, Subjects Taught, Grades Taught

Secular: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Jewish: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Informal Youth Experience**

Camping	<input type="checkbox"/> participant	# of years: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> leadership	# of years: _____
Israel Trip	<input type="checkbox"/> participant	# of years: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> leadership	# of years: _____
Hillel	<input type="checkbox"/> participant	# of years: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> leadership	# of years: _____
Youth Group	<input type="checkbox"/> participant	# of years: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> leadership	# of years: _____

**Movement Affiliation**

Traditional     Conservative     Reform     Reconstructionist     Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrew Language Proficiency**

Read (Decode)     Write ( print  script)     Comprehend     Speak

**Teaching Certification** (Type, Issuing Authority, Date)

Secular: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Jewish: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**References** (Name, School or Business, Address, Phone, Position)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Certifications and Releases**

Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?  Yes  No

You will be asked to show proof of authorization to work within three days of being offered a position.

Have you ever been convicted of or have you ever plead guilty to a crime?  Yes  No

If yes, please provide dates of conviction, place where conviction occurred and the nature of the offense.

A conviction is not an automatic bar to employment.

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In submitting this application for employment, I understand that an investigation may be made whereby information is obtained regarding my character, previous employment, general reputation, educational background, credit record and/or criminal history. I authorize anyone possessing this information to furnish it to **Hiring School** and/or a 3rd party company upon request and I release anyone so authorized, **Hiring School** and/or a 3rd party company from all liability and damages whatsoever in furnishing, obtaining or using said information.

I understand, also, that I am required to abide by all rules and policies of **Hiring School**.

I certify that the answers given to the above questions are true and correct. I understand that if it is determined that any of my answers are false, I may be denied employment or, if hired, my employment may be terminated.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize **Hiring School** and its employees and agents to answer any questions that any prospective employer may ask about me and my employment with **Hiring School**, including the circumstances and reasons for the termination of my employment with **Hiring School**. I further release **Hiring School** and its employees and agents from any and all liability and waive any and all claims I may have against **Hiring School** and its employees and agents based upon any information that any of them provide to a prospective employer pursuant to this authorization.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

State Child Abuse Clearance

State Police Clearance

Giborim Portfolio

# Interview Worksheet

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Philosophy of Education/  
Jewish Education \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Matter Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline and  
Class Management \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Planning Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Age/Grade Level Suitability \_\_\_\_\_

Flexibility within Ability Levels \_\_\_\_\_

Adaptability to  
Administrative Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Relationship  
With Others \_\_\_\_\_

Ability to Communicate \_\_\_\_\_

Other Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interesting questions applicant asked: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Contract Provisions

*(Choose those provisions which meet your school contract's needs. This is only a sample list and you may want to add other provisions.)*

On behalf of Name of School, I am pleased to inform you of your appointment to the faculty of the Religious School for the 20XX—20XX academic year beginning Month XX, 20XX.

Your teaching salary will be \$0,000 for the year. You will be paid in 10 monthly installments payable at the end of each month beginning September, 20XX.

You are assigned to teach:

Grade      Day and Time

In the event that the Educational Director determines that there are an insufficient number of students for your class, this agreement may be terminated without any further obligation to you. We will make every effort to make an alternative teaching situation available to you if possible. However, if this is not possible, **Synagogue Name** is under no obligation.

You will be entitled to 0.00 hours of leave for illness or to tend to important personal or family matters during the academic year. Unused sick/ personal time may not be accrued from one year to the next.

In the event of a school closing, usually weather related, you will be paid for the day as if it were a regular school day. The Educational Director may reschedule these missed days. You will not be paid additional salary for these rescheduled days.

You are required to be in your classroom, supervising your students, at least 10 minutes prior to each class session and remain at least 10 minutes after each teaching session. You are responsible for dismissal duty at the end of the teaching session as per the posted schedule. Failure to comply with this schedule may result in dismissal.

You are responsible to fulfill all aspects of the curriculum in a manner satisfactory to the Educational Director.

You are required to attend in-service and parent meetings scheduled during the year by the Educational Director in place of regular class sessions. You are required to attend the opening faculty meeting. Missing meetings, events or in-service days is considered an absence equivalent to missing a day of teaching.

You are responsible for maintaining accurate daily attendance records and preparing report cards in a timely fashion as directed.

You are responsible for notifying the school as soon as possible if you need a substitute teacher. You must provide a lesson plan for the substitute.

You are responsible for communicating class progress and problems on a regular basis to the Educational Director. In the event that the Educational Director determines that curriculum or lesson outlines should be prepared by you, such outlines will be submitted in a timely manner and will be followed by you during the school year.

You are expected to carry out all of your teaching duties in accordance with the precepts of **Name of Movement** Judaism as practiced by this congregation.

You acknowledge by signing this agreement that you have read and understood the Faculty Administrative Handbook and you agree to provisions laid out in this document.

If you do not meet the standard and requirements of the Religious School as prescribed by the Educational Director or if there is a determination that you are not teaching the assigned material or following the policies of the school or synagogue, you may be subject to dismissal prior to the end of the school year. At that time, the Religious School will no longer have any obligation to you.

If you are a new staff member, you agree that your first X weeks are a probationary period. During this period, the Educational Director may terminate your contract for any reason, after giving you two weeks notice. This contract terminates on Month XX, 20XX unless renewed by written agreement.