

PLACEMENT KIT



**A Guide for the
Institution**

WHEN YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR AN EDUCATOR

The office of the Association of Reform Jewish Educators (formerly the National Association of Temple Educators) serves the world of Reform Jewish education in many ways. One of its primary roles is to provide a Placement Service for both its professional members and for the educational institutions of the Reform Movement. The ARJE oversees and facilitates the placement process, serving both educators and searching institutions. The purpose of this Placement Kit is to provide sample guidelines and direction for both parties throughout this process. Although its Executive Director is available for consultation and guidance, the ARJE Office is in no way involved in making decisions about hiring an educator or accepting a professional position.

The ARJE serves a variety of institutions: congregational schools, early childhood education centers, day schools, camp and youth programs, HUC-JIR, the URJ, and others. Its membership includes educators with a variety of experiences. Some are new to Jewish education, having recently completed their professional training or having recently entered the field. Others have already been working in Jewish education and are making a professional move through the ARJE placement process. The goal of any placement process is to find the educator best suited for the specific position. There is no “perfect” position for all applicants and there is no applicant who is “perfect” for every position. Through the placement process, applicants and institutions get to know one another in order to find a “match” that will be fulfilling and rewarding for all concerned.

The process of searching for an Educator involves several steps and considerations:

- Setting up a Search Committee
- Designating contact people who will communicate with applicants
- Development of priorities & vision for the institution’s educational program
- Development of a job description for the educator and determining a title for the position
- Applicants: getting to know applicants; how to treat applicants professionally and respectfully; considering the applicants; hiring an applicant.

This kit provides guidelines and direction for the members of an institution searching for an educator. The ARJE (formerly NATE) Placement Committee has compiled these materials to help facilitate the process in an effective and professional way. The ARJE Executive Director is available at all times to assist ARJE members in the placement process, and members are encouraged to consult with the ARJE Office as necessary and desired. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with the ARJE Office if we can be of assistance in this endeavor.

THE ARJE PLACEMENT LIST

The ARJE is able to serve as a clearinghouse both for positions that are open in congregations and institutions affiliated with the Reform Movement, and for educators who would like to fill these positions; congregations / institutions and ARJE members who are in good standing may utilize the ARJE's placement service. Additionally, the ARJE lists some institutional and / or organizational positions from other movements (e.g., American Jewish University) and/or training institutions (e.g. Hebrew College).

When an institution first contacts the ARJE (and the position is public knowledge), the position is added to the "Awaiting Application" section of our placement list. From the time the packet of materials is received, an institution has one month to return the completed Search for Educator application. If the completed application is not returned within this time, then the institution is placed in the "Positions Withdrawn" section of the ARJE placement list until the completed application is received by the ARJE Office.

After receipt of the completed Search for Educator application, the congregation's/institution's listing is moved into the "active" section of the ARJE placement list. In this section of the list, a bit of demographic information is included in a congregation's/institution's entry: salary (range), congregation/institution size, school size, and grades that the job entails.

Please note that a position is not officially available and ARJE members may not apply for a position (i.e., have their materials forwarded to the congregation/institution) while it is in the "Awaiting Applications" section of the Placement List. It is only AFTER a congregation/institution has returned its completed *Search for Educator* application that materials from an interested applicant may be forwarded to an congregation/institution.

The ARJE placement list is posted on ARJE's website in the section open only to ARJE members, and is updated a minimum of once per week; it is more frequently updated during the busy "placement season" (December/January through April/May). The applications (in pdf format) of searching congregations and institutions are also posted in this section of the ARJE's website, and are available to ARJE members for their perusal and download.

When an ARJE member who is searching for a position is interested in applying for a position, s/he requests (usually via telephone or e-mail) that his/her materials be e-mailed to a searching institution or congregation.

The process is then an open one—the institution/congregation is free (and urged) to contact an applicant to let him/her know that it has received his/her materials, and will be in touch. At the same time, the applicant is also free to contact the congregation/institution.

As discussed below, it is important that communication with applicants be established as soon as materials are received by the congregation/institution—at the very least, via a notice that the materials have been received. Please let the applicant know that you have received his/her materials from the ARJE Office.

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The temple president or members of the Board of Trustees typically appoint the Search Committee. It should include 6 – 12 members. It is advisable to include various representatives from the Institution:

- the (Senior) Rabbi
- newer and more senior members of the institution who are appropriate to the terms of the job description
- those with young children in the school and those without
- a member of the school faculty
- a high school student
- members of the current School Committee or other such body
- representative(s) from adult education
- representative(s) from early childhood education.

Other members of the professional staff and clergy may sit on the committee.

It is important to note that the most successful searches occur when there is a close partnership and strong collaboration between lay and professional leadership.

In appointing members to the Search Committee, one or two members should be designated as contact people for the applicants throughout the process. This person (or people) will be responsible for regular communication with all applicants who have submitted applications for the position. An individual should be appointed to serve as a contact person with the ARJE Office as well. **It is important that the e-mail addresses of at least 2 people be provided in the Search for Educator application.**

DEVELOPING PRIORITIES & VISION FOR THE INSTITUTION AND A JOB DESCRIPTION

Once appointed, the Search Committee should be prepared to meet together as a committee, prior to meeting with Applicants. At this time the committee is charged with articulating a set of priorities and a vision for the educational program of the institution and developing a job description for the educator (if

one does not already exist). During these initial discussions, the Search Committee may address the following topics in a candid and constructive manner:

- Describe the religious environment of the congregation or institution.
- What is the vision or mission of our educational institution ?
- List three of the congregation's/institution's strengths and three challenges.
- What is the current status of our educational programs ?
- What are three of the strengths of the current educational program ?
- Discuss a challenging situation in the educational program in the congregation or institution.
- Describe an "ideal" applicant for this position.
- Review the following lists of "Personal Characteristics & Skills" and "Areas of Professional Experience & Responsibility;" discuss them and prioritize them for your congregation/institution; select three from each list that the committee considers essential for your educator. Please note that they are in no particular order.

Personal Characteristics & Skills

- Ability to relate to parents
- Ability to relate to children
- Administrative Skills
- Attention to Details
- Communication Skills
- Creativity
- Decision-making
- Dedication
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Integrity
- Knowledge of Judaica
- Knowledge of Hebrew
- Organizational skills
- Sensitivity to needs of students, parents, faculty
- Sincerity

Areas of Professional Experience & Responsibility

- Administrative tasks (such as: class arrangements, record keeping, forms, ordering supplies)
- Community involvement
- Curriculum and related educational material
- Disciplinary issues
- Faculty recruiting, hiring and supervision and development
- Family and parent education
- Holiday celebrations
- School policies
- Shabbat celebrations
- Temple Bulletin and other publicity

The Committee's answers to these questions will be most helpful in completing the *Search for Educator* application, described below.

DEVELOPING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

A Job Description should include the following categories:

- Type of position: Full-Time or Part-Time
- Job title as per the suggestions in the Search for Educator application:

Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning (DoLJL) or Director of Lifelong Learning (DoLL)—Responsible for oversight of virtually all education in the congregation; supervises all education and educational administration personnel

When a congregation seeks to hire a DoLJL or DoLL, it should consider how the position will be appropriately supported with additional educational and administrative staff, all of whom would be supervised by the DoLJL or DoLL.

Director of Congregational Learning or Education (DoCL or DoCE)—Serves in an oversight capacity of the congregational school and has other congregational education responsibilities (which may or may not include supervision in the area[s] of youth programming, adult education, early childhood, and / or other areas of education)

When a congregation seeks to hire a DoCE/L, it should consider how the position will be appropriately supported with additional educational and administrative staff, such as an Assistant Director of Congregational Learning/ Education, all of whom would be supervised by the DoCL/E.

Religious School Director (RSD)—Primary responsibility is direction of the religious school

Assistant Religious School Director—May be hired to provide additional educational support to the Religious School Director

School Administrator—Primarily responsible for administration of the school and perhaps some educational responsibilities

- The educator's professional responsibilities (such as: curriculum development, budget preparation and implementation, faculty supervision, administrative tasks, teaching, etc.) See Sample Job Descriptions included in this Kit.
- The schedule of the educational programming (i.e. class hours, etc.)
- The supervisor of the Educator

SEARCH FOR EDUCATOR APPLICATION

The Educator Search Application provides applicants for your position with essential data about your congregation or institution and about the community. Just as the applicant's résumé provides an overview of a candidate, this form provides an overview of your institution. The Search Committee should designate two individuals to complete the form on behalf of the committee; it is suggested that one lay person and one member of the professional staff do this, when appropriate.

MISSION STATEMENT OR ESSAY: VISION OF THE INSTITUTION

The Educator Search Application that the committee completes provides the data and details about the educational program and the institution. The mission statement or essay serves two additional purposes in the search process. It offers the members of the committee—both lay leaders and professional staff—the opportunity to explore the educational mission and/or vision of the school or institution. A well thought-out, carefully completed, and accurate Educator Search Application will enable the candidates for the position to understand more fully the perspectives, goals, and culture of the congregation or institution. This will help attract suitable candidates for your position.

It is most appropriate for the Search Committee members to collaborate with the congregation's/institution's lay and professional leadership when preparing this statement. If the congregation or institution has a mission statement, please include a copy of it with these materials as well.

- Designate two members of the committee to compose answers to the questions below in written form following the committee's deliberations. The essay should be approximately two typed pages.
- What is the vision or mission of our educational institution ?
- Describe the religious environment of the congregation or institution.
- What are three of the congregation's/institution's strengths ?
- What is the current status of our educational programs ?
- What are three of the strengths of the current educational program ?
- Discuss a challenging situation in the educational program in the congregation or institution.
- List and describe three particular skills or areas of expertise essential for the position of educator at the congregation or institution.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Be prepared to provide samples of materials from the congregation/institution to applicants during the search process. Do NOT send these items to the ARJE Office. The packet of materials can include items such as: synagogue handbook for new members, religious school handbook, camp or school brochures, newsletters, fliers, registration materials, bulletins, etc.).

THE INTERVIEW/HIRING PROCESS

CORRESPONDENCE WITH APPLICANTS

In order to maintain a professional and respectful relationship between applicants and the Search Committee, it is critical for the congregation or institution to remain in contact with applicants throughout the process. It is advisable to designate one or two members of the Search Committee, either a lay person or member of the professional staff, who will maintain such contact through written letters or e-mail, as appropriate. Following is a list of letters to be sent from the Search Committee to the applicants at various stages in the search process when appropriate. Communication with applicants during all phases of the process is not only a matter of courtesy, but also goes a long way towards presenting your congregation/institution as a first-class, professional, and menschlich operation. Samples of the following letters are included in Appendix Two of this kit as well:

- Letter One: Thank you for your interest/we have received your application
- Letter Two: We have received your application and after reviewing your materials, are not interested
- Letter Three: Schedule of interview
- Letter Four: We continue to be interested in your candidacy and will contact you (after interview)
- Letter Five: We are not interested in your candidacy (after interview)
- Letter Six: We have offered the position to another candidate (to be sent to a "finalist")
- Letter Seven: We are offering you the position
- Letter Eight: Confirmation of hiring for the ARJE Office

The ARJE Office should receive copies of all correspondence between the institution and the applicant.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The Search Committee is expected to pay for all expenses related to the interview process for both local and out-of-town applicants, including transportation, hotel and meals. The candidate should be housed in a motel or hotel. In addition to the formal interview with the Search Committee, the applicant should have the opportunity to meet (where applicable) with all members of the professional staff (rabbi, cantor, early childhood educator, and administrator), members of the Board or Executive Committee, members of the School Committee and members of the Faculty.

Where appropriate, the applicant could attend a session of school or school event, a worship service, or other institutional event, if feasible. The applicant should have a tour of the facilities and the surrounding community. When applicants are being seriously considered for the position, informal meetings or meals are also appropriate.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

In many cases, the first formal contact that (members of) the Search Committee will have with a candidate can be via telephone or video call. The impressions you glean from a telephone conversation with the candidate, considered together with the résumé and personal statement, can help you in deciding which of the candidates you will invite to your community for a personal interview. Of course, a conference call is not a substitute for an in-depth personal interview, and should not be viewed as such. It is only one part of the process. In some cases, Search Committees have utilized teleconferencing calls as well in their initial screening. Most important, however, is that it is crucial that the Search Committee prepare well thought-out questions for all phases of the search.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

The following questions will help the institution prepare for the interview with the candidate. In addition to these questions, the Search Committee should prepare a few case examples of issues for the educator to address. These may be along the lines of: working with a difficult parent, re-energizing a teacher, health and safety issues, organizational issues etc. It is highly recommended that the Search Committee consult with an attorney regarding legal and appropriate questions to ask of candidates.

- What motivated you to become a Jewish educator ?
- What attracts you to this position ?
- How do you see the role of Jewish education in this type of setting ?
- What is your philosophy of education for this type of setting ?
- How do you go about developing a team among your faculty/staff ?
- Describe curricula and creative programs you have developed and implemented.
- Explain how you would handle a disciplinary situation. The committee may present a specific situation and ask the applicant to respond.
- How would you encourage students to remain in the program after they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah ?
- How do you see your role in working closely with the rabbi, the cantor, and the school committee ?
- What questions do you have for the committee ?

The Applicant's Résumé

The résumé provides essential information about the background, education and professional experiences of the applicant. It is the responsibility of the institution to carefully review and verify this information. A member of the Search Committee should be designated to contact references and report back to the committee about these discussions.

Suggested Questions for References Supplied by the Candidate

- How long have you known the applicant ?
- In what capacity have you known him/her ?
- What are his/her strengths and weaknesses ?
- Has s/he been successful in the current position ?
- Given the opportunity, would you hire this applicant ?
- Is there anything I didn't ask you about that you would like to share about this applicant?

The Applicant's Personal Statement

As a part of the ARJE placement process, each applicant is asked to prepare a written Personal Statement of two to three pages; this statement becomes a part of the ARJE member's placement file, and is sent out along with the résumé. The purpose of this Personal Statement is to furnish members of a Search Committee with a fuller pre-interview "picture" of an applicant's personality, interests, passions and character than a factual listing of items on a résumé can provide.

EDUCATOR'S CONTRACT

When negotiations have been completed between a candidate and a congregation/institution, the terms of the negotiations should be formalized in a written contract or letter of intent. A representative of the congregation and the educator should sign the documents. It is urged that the contract follow the suggestions and guidelines of the Guidelines for Educator-Congregational Relationships ("The Blue Book"), the joint agreement between the URJ (formerly the UAHC), the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis), and the ARJE (adopted and recommend in 1988). Also available for both educators and congregations is A Contract Sampler for Educators, a publication of ARJE's Contract Sampler Committee.

APPENDIX ONE: Search for Educator Checklist/Timeline for Institutions

Fill in the appropriate dates on this form and check off each item as it is completed.

Event	Date Due	Date Completed (✓)
Institution Contacts the ARJE Office or visits the web site for educator search documents		
Institution convenes a Search Committee with chair/s designated as contact-people for the ARJE Office and applicants		
Position is posted on the ARJE Placement List in "Awaiting Applications" section (as office is directed to do so)		
Institution completes Educator Search Application application and returns to the ARJE Office within one month of receiving the packet		
Position is moved into the "active" section of the ARJE placement listings		
Educator contacts the ARJE office indicating interest in a position: his/her résumé/personal statement are mailed to congregation/institution, and congregation's/institution's materials are mailed to him/her (usually within two business days)		
Congregation/Institution responds (via e-mail, snail-mail, or telephone) directly to educator, indicating that materials have been received		
If congregation/institution is interested, a time-frame for an initial in-person or telephone interview is arranged		
Institution/congregation maintains ongoing contact with all applicants regarding status (unless there is absolutely no interest)		
Institution/congregation offers the position to an candidate, informing the ARJE Office at the same time		
Position is accepted by the educator		
Contract is written, negotiated and completed (within 3 weeks)		
All other active candidates receive official notification that they are no longer being considered for the position		
ARJE Office is informed of the successful search		
Announcement of completed search is included in the ARJE placement list		

APPENDIX TWO: Sample Letters

Following are sample texts for e-mail letters to be sent to applicants during the search process. They are provided here as guidelines for Search Committee chairpeople. They can be embellished and personalized as appropriate, including in terms of format, e.g., e-mail or snail-mail.

The ARJE Office should receive copies of all correspondence between the institution and the applicant.

Letter One: Thank you for your interest/we have received your application

To be sent or e-mailed to an applicant within ONE WEEK of receiving application

Dear Ms. Candidate:

We are writing to acknowledge that we have received your application for the position of Educator at Temple Teglach. We thank you for your interest in the position.

We will be in touch with you soon regarding the next steps in the process.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Two: We have received your application and after reviewing your materials, are not interested

Dear Mr. Candidate:

We are writing to acknowledge that we have received your application for the position of Educator at Temple Teglach. We thank you for your interest in the position.

After review of your materials, we have decided to continue our search. We wish you luck in your efforts to secure a position.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Three: Schedule of interview

To be sent to an applicant within ONE MONTH of receiving application

Dear Ms. Candidate:

At this time the Search Committee of Temple Teglach would like to schedule an interview with you at the congregation (via telephone).

We would like to meet with you on Thursday evening, January 11th at 8:00 p.m. Please contact me at (555) 555-1212 to confirm this time and to confirm arrangements for the phone call with (your transportation to) Temple Teglach.

[If interview is in person]: Please bring a packet of educational materials with you when you meet with our Search Committee, as well as a list of references.

The Committee members look forward to meeting with you on January 11th.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Four: We are not interested in your candidacy (after interview)

To be sent to the applicant within TWO WEEKS of initial interview (sometimes longer if other candidates are being interviewed)

Dear Mr. Candidate:

On behalf of members of the Search Committee of Temple Teglach, we would like to thank you once again for your interest in the position of educator. We enjoyed meeting with you (via telephone) and were quite impressed with your experience and educational materials.

After careful consideration, however, of several candidates with excellent credentials as your own, we have decided to continue our search for an educator.

Please accept our thanks for your interest and our best wishes for success in your future.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Five: We continue to be interested in your candidacy and will contact you (after interview)

To be sent to the applicant within TWO WEEKS of initial interview

Dear Rabbi Candidate:

On behalf of members of the Search Committee of Temple Teglach, we want to once again thank you for your interest in the position of educator. We enjoyed meeting with you and were quite impressed with your experience and the educational materials you provided.

At this time we are interviewing several candidates for the position. We expect to complete these interviews within the next month. At that time we will be contacting our top applicants for further discussion. You can therefore expect to hear from our Search Committee again on or about March 15th.

We look forward to being in touch then.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Six: We have offered the position to another candidate (to be sent to a "finalist")

To be sent to the applicant WITHIN ONE WEEK of another candidate accepting the position

Dear Mr. Candidate:

On behalf of the entire Search Committee and the congregants at Temple Teglach, we thank you for applying for the position of educator and for meeting with us.

We were fortunate to consider with several highly qualified applicants for the position. The selection process has been a most challenging one for all of us. While we are quite impressed with your experience and credentials, after lengthy discussions and many considerations, the Committee has offered the position to another applicant.

We wish you all the best and are certain that you will find a position that is most appropriate to your many talents and skills.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Seven: We are offering you the position

Dear Ms. Candidate:

On behalf of the Search Committee of Temple Teglach, it is our great pleasure to offer you the position of Temple Educator (use the title appropriate for your position).

A written contract is being prepared and will be sent to you under separate cover.

It has been a delight to get to know you through this process, and we look forward to working closely together at Temple Teglach as you become a part of our temple family.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

Letter Eight: Confirmation of hiring for the ARJE Office

To be sent to the ARJE Office WITHIN ONE WEEK of applicant accepting position

Dear Rabbi Schickler,

On behalf of the Search Committee of Temple Teglach, we are pleased to report that Mr. Shlomo Candidate has accepted the position as Temple Educator (use the title appropriate for your position).

He will begin his employment here on DATE. We will forward a copy of his completed contract to your office within the next several weeks.

Thank you for your assistance in this process.

L'shalom,

Name

The Search Committee of Temple Teglach

cc: ARJE Office

APPENDIX THREE: ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Evaluating School Leadership: A Handbook on Searching, Interviewing and Evaluating School Heads and Committees. © BJE of Greater Boston, 1991 (Revised 1997, 2000)

<http://bje.org/?innovation.publications>

Educator Evaluation Tools produced by ARJE

<http://www.natenet.org/docs/>

Brit Kodesh—Sacred Partnership: Readings and Exercises for Self-Study on the Relationship Between the Professional and Volunteer Leadership in Reform Congregations. © Synagogue 2000 and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 2001

<http://urjbooksandmusic.com/product.php?productid=10073>

And Keep the Paths of the Righteous: Synagogues and Their Staff. © Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 2003

<http://www.urjbooksandmusic.com/product.php?productid=10071>

Contract Sampler for Educators produced by ARJE

<http://www.natenet.org/docs/>



RESOLUTION

GAY AND LESBIAN JEWS



UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEMPLE EDUCATORS

November 01, 1991
24 Cheshvan 5752

PREAMBLE:

In 1977, the UAHC General Assembly called for an end to discrimination against homosexuals, and expanded upon this in 1987 by calling for the full Inclusion of gay and lesbian Jews in all aspects of synagogue life. The UAHC urged it congregations and affiliates to “encourage lesbian and gay Jews to share and participate in the worship, general congregational life, **employment**, and leadership of all synagogues; implement programs supportive of Jewish lesbians and gays; and, continue to develop educational programs in the synagogue and the community which promote understanding and respect for lesbians and gays.”

THEREFORE. BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEMPLE EDUCATORS:

- 1 Accept all Jewish educators who meet eligibility requirements for membership in NATE regardless of sexual orientation;
- 2 Welcome openly gay and lesbian educators to serve in positions of leadership In NATE;
- 3 Afford to all members of NATE, regardless of sexual orientation, all the benefits of membership, including those related to placement and leadership responsibilities within the Jewish community;
- 4 Support the rights of all individuals within our profession to equal consideration and equal opportunities regardless of sexual orientation;
- 5 Consider all applicants for positions in our congregational schools, regardless of sexual orientation;
- 6 Act as educational leaders in the Jewish community by developing curricula and outreach programs to help gay and lesbian Jews become fully integrated members of the Jewish community;
- 7 Encourage our members to create educational experiences, curricula, and materials which will promote positive attitudes toward all Jews, regardless of sexual orientation.

Acknowledgments: Rabbi Beth Klafter, RJE

ARJE (formerly NATE) Placement Committee

Melanie Cole Goldberg, RJE, Chairperson

Elizabeth Bloch, RJE

Deena Bloomstone, RJE

Ilana Feitlowitz

Lisa Goldstein, RJE

Lesley Silverstone, RJE

ARJE Executive Director Rabbi Stanley T. Schickler, RJE

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