



The
**Association of
Reform Jewish Educators**
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633 Third Avenue | New York, NY 10017-6778

EDUCATOR SEARCH APPLICATION

**RETURN ORIGINAL TO:
(Preferably by E-mail)**

Rabbi Stan Schickler, RJE
Association of Reform Jewish Educators
633 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017-6778
212-452-6510 sschickler@reformeducators.org

CONGREGATION/INSTITUTION	Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties	DATE OF APPLICATION	04/15/2021
STREET ADDRESS	46 Peaceable Street		
CITY, STATE/PROVINCE, ZIP CODE/POSTAL ZONE	Ridgefield, CT, 06877		
TELEPHONE NUMBER	203-438-6589	FAX	
E-MAIL	office@ourshirshalom.org	WEBSITE	OurShirShalom.org
URJ DISTRICT	East	DATE POSITION IS AVAILABLE	07/01/2021
POSITION TITLE	Educator/ RSD/Clergy Educator	FULL or PART-TIME	Part Time

- ☐ **Director of Congregational Learning (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)
- ☐ **Religious School Director (RSD)**—Primary responsibility is direction of the religious school
- ☐ **School Administrator**—Primarily responsible for administration of the school and perhaps some educational responsibilities

PLEASE INCLUDE A JOB DESCRIPTION WITH THIS APPLICATION

Come help shape the future of Jewish education with Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties and contribute to the success of our sacred community! We are a vibrant and dynamic sacred community seeking an energetic and innovative educator to join our team and direct our educational programming for families with children in grades PK-12.

Our next Educator/Religious School Director will work in person for the twenty-four-ish Sunday mornings when our Religious School is in session, as well as occasional Shabbat worship and programs/open houses. Additional core responsibilities (including supervision of our remote mid-week programs) may be completed while working on site or remotely. This is a part time position and we are committed to establishing and maintaining healthy, appropriate boundaries and expectations consistent with our engagement agreement. Our retiring director enjoyed the flexibility of working mostly from home (even prior to the pandemic!) and our next director could live locally or commute from the greater NYC area, the Northeast corridor, or beyond.

Core Responsibilities:

1. Team Player

“Sacred Partnerships” are central to our congregation, within our staff team and between our lay and professional leaders. We are committed to working together to ensure individual success and the success of our sacred community. We are process oriented and thoughtful in decision making, taking the time to reflect upon and consider the values and vision of our sacred community. Our holistic approach means working together to create and adapt our festival and lifecycle observances with an eye towards engaging religious school students and families.

2. Creative and Visionary

We aspire to thrive as a visionary congregation, inspiring our future and the future of Judaism. Our programs were adapted rapidly this year in response to the COVID pandemic and we learned that our community is open to (and eager for) innovation. Working together to try out new ideas is important to our process, emphasizing “and” over “but.” We hope our new director will meet us where we are, seek “low hanging fruit” while learning about our community, and then collaborate to create a cohesive vision for the future of formal youth educational programs in our sacred community. Our established curriculum is ready for review and development. We have responded well to many of the challenges of the past year with creativity and we recognize opportunities for further growth. You will set the tone for our teachers and students and ensure that our Religious School is a treasured part of our children’s Jewish upbringing. We expect you to be open to feedback from parents and our Board AND have your own point of view, bringing the best of Jewish education to our sacred community.

3. Organized and Responsible

Oversight of our 80-100 student school

A. Communication

Maintain strong communications with families, teachers, staff, students, and prospective congregants. Regular face-to-face, phone, online, and electronic communication including prompt responses to calls and e-mails is important and our expectations are consistent with the part-time status of the position. You will work with our staff to promote student enrollment and engagement. Our communications team is available to assist with preparation of newsletters, blasts, fliers, social media, and other communications for mass consumption at the direction and vision of our Educator/Director.

B. Teacher Support and Supervision

Support and directly supervise our 5-10 part time teachers. Possible oversight of our mentor and student teacher programs for high school students to assist teachers and/or teach classes on their own. Related duties to include: lesson plan oversight, observing teachers and offering formal and informal feedback/evaluation, planning teacher training and development, classroom management guidance, hiring and scheduling teachers (and substitute teachers).

C. Administrative Oversight of Religious School Operations

Related duties to include: maintaining attendance and payroll records, submitting setup requests to our Administrator/Executive Director, develop annual Religious School calendar and budget, oversee annual registration process and class assignment.

Additional responsibilities will be detailed based upon interests and experience.

This is an exciting opportunity: we seek a passionate educator who will partner in our sacred work and help us innovate and inspire. There are many growth opportunities (and “growing edges”) in our congregation and a culture that is supportive of meaningful experimentation and used to change. We are also open to unknown opportunities for change and growth and are eager to hear your ideas too! We seek warmth, charisma and organization.

This is a challenging opportunity: the transition from our long-serving Religious School Director, Leslie Gottlieb, as she retires from her position and becomes Director Emerita. Prior to the pandemic, religious school enrollment was decreasing slightly, consistent with other congregations in our area. We anticipate a modest increase in enrollment in the next few years as we are hearing from many families with young children moving out of NYC to our area in response to the pandemic, seeking space and the excellent reputation of our local schools. Our new educator/religious school director will inherit a strong, established program with significant opportunities for innovation and growth in a community accustomed to and supportive of change. This is a special and challenging opportunity for an educator to help us imagine and build a vibrant and inspiring future.

Congregation Shir Shalom is a sacred community engaging in sacred work while cultivating sacred partnerships within our staff team and between our lay and professional leaders. We aspire to connect our community to each other and our tradition. Our staff team is dynamic and versatile and we anticipate some flexibility in assigned responsibilities, based upon the Educator/Director’s strengths and interests. We are seeking an Educator/Director who will become a partner in our sacred work, professional, thoughtful, introspective, caring, and attentive to details. Our Educator will direct our Religious School including curricular development, supervision of teachers (and hiring, as needed), and outreach to new and prospective congregant families. Engagement and retention of our current congregants is a major priority in the years ahead and the Educator/Director will be integral to our success, helping us better engage and connect families.

There is also some flexibility based upon the interests and experiences of the Educator/Director, to teach, guide our student-teacher program, lead family education programs, work with students post-B Mitzvah, teach adult education, etc. While oversight of our Religious School is the primary responsibility, a clergy/educator could also become an integral part of our clergy team with opportunities to preach, lead or co-lead Shabbat worship and life cycle events, with support, supervision, and mentoring from our Rabbi who has served the community for eight years.

Congregation Shir Shalom is located in the greater NYC area, about an hour’s drive from midtown Manhattan (depending upon traffic, which is usually light on Sunday mornings) with easy access to MetroNorth stations on the Harlem and New Haven lines. Our families reside in New York and Connecticut and are united in their desire to deepen their connections to Judaism and Jewish community and add meaning to their lives. Many families moved to our area for the natural beauty, open space, small-town feel, cultural opportunities, and stellar schools, with the convenience and opportunities on proximity to New York City. Pre-pandemic, many families commuted daily into NYC (and other cities in between) for work. A few families live in NYC during the week with a weekend or summer home in our area, and a few families head north on winter weekends for skiing. Our congregants come from a range of religious backgrounds across Judaism as well as other faith traditions. All are welcome!

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILY UNITS	# OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS IN THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	AVERAGE # OF ANNUAL B'NAI MITZVAH
THIS YEAR	275	53	75	18
FIVE YEARS AGO	302	80	130	22
FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS ARE Increasing, especially as families exit NYC in response to COVID-19				

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED BY GRADE

PreK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		5	6	10	7	9	13	19	6	6	7		
OTHER (specify):													

DAY CARE	PARENTS' DAY OUT	EARLY CHILDHOOD	25
OTHER (specify):			

HEBREW BEGINS IN GRADE	2	AND CONTINUES THROUGH GRADE	7	CONFIRMATION BEGINS IN GRADE	8
ADULT PROGRAMMING	Yes			JEWISH PARENTING PROGRAMMING	
CAMPS (URJ REGIONAL AND CONGREGATIONAL)	25 Campers at URJ camps in Summer 2019. Mostly Eisner Camp.				

II. DAYS AND TIMES OF CLASSES (PRE-COVID)

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	HEBREW SCHOOL	CONFIRMATION	POST-CONFIRMATION
Sundays: 9-Noon	Wednesday 4-6	Wednesday 4-5	
WEEKDAY EARLY CHILDHOOD	DAY CARE	PARENTING/FAMILY PROGRAMMING	PARENTS' DAY OUT
9-2:30 (many leave at noon)			
CAMP(CONGREGATION ONLY)			
OTHER (specify)			

We began the year with a hybrid Religious School program, offering in-person programs on Sundays and Wednesdays that were live-streamed. As COVID numbers increased in our area, we went fully remote. We also began to adapt our offerings, using Sundays to focus on Jewish culture, shortening the length of online classes and offering Hebrew learning for all students mid-week, based upon their schedules, and found that students responded well to learning Hebrew during shorter, focused sessions with smaller groups. We plan to continue this approach to mid-week Hebrew learning in Fall 2021 with a few options for families along with shorter sessions on Sundays. There is some flexibility with our mid-week learning plans.

III. PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Even if they will not be associated with the congregation next year, please list the names of all current professional staff members. Indicate if their position is full-time or part-time and their years of service with the congregation. Additional lines are provided for other staff positions, if applicable.			
	NAME	FULL or PART-TIME	YEARS SERVED
SENIOR RABBI	David Reiner	FULL	8
CANTOR	Deborah Katchko-Gray	PART	22 – (FT for first 12 years)
EDUCATOR	Leslie Gottlieb	FULL (Departing)	22
ADMINISTRATOR	Laura Morris	FULL	8
YOUTH GROUP ADVISOR	Outsourced – BBYO	PART	2
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR	Sarah Denyer	FULL	2
CONTROLLER	Lori Stalowicz	FULL (Departing)	4
SECURITY GUARD	Outsourced	PART	2

We are in the process of restructuring our Administrative Staff with the departure of our Controller. Our accounting/bookkeeping will be outsourced and we are searching for a Full Time Executive Director who will oversee our daily operations.

Does the professional staff undergo a regular performance review process ? How often ? Please include a description of this process, especially as it applies to the educator.

Rabbi Reiner engages in an ongoing mutual review process with a small committee that meets monthly. The rabbi engages in ongoing mutual review with professional staff on a smaller scale, one on one. Our professional staff engages in regular performance reviews with lay leaders, though we would like to expand the ongoing mutual review process to include additional staff members. The current process begins with interviews of all staff conducted by two lay leaders with supervisory or HR experience. The questions include opportunities for self reflection and comments on working with other members of our staff team. Responses are collected and reviewed. Each staff member then meets with two lay leaders to review and discuss feedback and engage in further self-reflection. If a detailed plan is required, one is created. A written review is then prepared and presented to each member of our staff team for review and comment. As needed, additional performance reviews may be scheduled in response to specific needs or opportunities for growth identified during the review process.

SECRETARIES/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS		FULL or PART-TIME	YEARS SERVED
TO EDUCATOR(S)			
TO RABBI(S)	1	PART TIME	1
TO CANTOR(S)			
TO ADMINSTRATOR			

We employ three part time communications specialists: One manages our website and social media. Another manages our electronic communications. The third is manages our media presence (preparing press releases, news stories, etc.).

NUMBER OF TEACHERS		SPECIALISTS	
COORDINATORS / DEPARTMENT HEADS		ART	
PRIMARY	3	COMPUTER	
INTERMEDIATE	3	DANCE	
UPPER		DRAMA	
BAR / BAT MITZVAH	1	HEBREW	2
HIGH SCHOOL / POST B'NAI MITZVAH	1	LEARNING CENTER	
ARE THERE ANY FULL-TIME TEACHERS ?	0	LIBRARIAN	
CUSTODIAL STAFF (specify full or part-time)	2 (PART TIME)		

IV. FACILITIES

SANCTUARY	1	NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS	8
CHAPEL		ART ROOM	
LIBRARY	1	MUSIC ROOM	
SOCIAL HALL / AUDITORIUM	3	YOUTH LOUNGE	1
SANCTUARY / SOCIAL HALL COMBINATION	Yes	TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER	1
		EDUCATOR'S OFFICE	1
		COMPUTER ROOM	
		STUDENT LEARNING CENTER	
OTHER (SPECIFY)			
IS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FACILITY SHARED WITH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL ? Sometimes			

AGE of BUILDINGS:	SANCTUARY	2006	SCHOOL	2006/1870	OFFICE AREA	2006/1870
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If there is a satellite facility, please describe it. Include size, distance from main facility, age, days/hours spent on that site, etc.
N/A

V. CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY

The Congregation / Institution was founded in	1967/2015	and became a member of the URJ (UAHC) in	1967?
The Shabbat prayer book used is	Mishkan T'filah		
The High Holy Day <i>machzor</i> used is	Mishkan HaNefesh		
Has the Religious School received ARJE Accreditation ?	No	If yes, in what year ?	

Temple Shearith Israel (Ridgefield, Connecticut) and Jewish Family Congregation (South Salem, New York) joined together in 2015 to become Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties, at the former site of Temple Shearith Israel. Our synagogue building is less than a mile from the NY/CT border, and families mostly live in Fairfield County, CT and Westchester County, NY, with a few families from Putnam County, NY and Litchfield County, CT.

What are the three primary goals of your congregation/institution?

1. Connect (within/among families and our sacred community, to each other and to Judaism)
2. Deepen (add meaning to our lives)
3. Inspire (the future of Judaism and a better world)

What are the congregation's/institution's strengths?

1. Open to innovation
2. Sacred Partnership
3. People are hungry for Judaism and meaningful Jewish connections.

What are the strengths of your educational program?

1. Flexibility
2. Connection to URJ Camps
3. Creating a positive Jewish identity for our students

What three four qualities in your Educator are most important to the congregation/institution?

1. Strong knowledge of pedagogy and the ability to work with all people as partners
2. Curiosity and creativity in seeking new methods, materials and programs.
3. Organizational skills to balance multiple responsibilities effectively and efficiently including listening and communicating.
4. Love of Judaism and Jewish community (and the advancement of Reform Judaism)

The three most important priorities of the congregation/institution's Educator should be:

1. Develop the integral role of Religious School in engaging and strengthening our community as a whole: successfully transitioning our Early Childhood Center students into our Religious School's Kindergarten, and keeping students and families engaged after becoming B Mitzvah.
2. Instill a positive Jewish identity in our students.
3. Inspire our students towards lifelong Jewish learning with a strong foundation built in our Religious School

The single most important thing an Educator needs to know about the congregation/institution is:

A strong Religious School is integral to our future; we are committed to working together in a sacred partnership to ensure success.

The three most important issues facing the congregation/institution in the next five years will be:

1. Retention
2. Engaging influx of families to our area in meaningful ways
3. Cultivating future lay leaders

VI. INCUMBENT EDUCATOR

Has the current educator been informed that the congregation / institution is in placement ?	Yes
On what date will the current educator relinquish his/her position ?	June 30, 2021

VII. COMMUNITY ATTRACTIONS

General population of location	Ridgefield, CT: 25k Lewisboro, NY: 12k	Total Jewish population	500
JEWISH INSTITUTIONS IN AREA			
JCC	Stamford, Mid-Westchester		
Federation	Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield Co.; Westchester Jewish Council		
Jewish Family Service	Primarily: Schoke JFS of Fairfield County		
Central Jewish Education Agency	Jewish Education Project & others		
Jewish Day School (which grades) ?	Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (Stamford, PK-12); The Leffell School (Schechter Westchester; White Plains, K-12)		
Other	Reform & Conservative Congregations within a 30ish minute drive: Georgetown, Danbury, Westport, Norwalk, Stamford, CT; Bedford Hills, Armonk, Yorktown Heights, Chappaqua, NY Several Chabad		
Majority of members' children attend public school, private school, or Jewish day school ?	Public School		
Colleges, universities and music conservatories in the area include	Western Connecticut State University Also within an hour's drive of NYC, New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, and Poughkeepsie with too many schools to list.		
What cultural opportunities are available (e.g., symphony, opera, museum, theatre, sports, etc.) ?	The Ridgefield Playhouse, Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra, Aldrich Museum, Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center, Weir Farm National Historic Park, Woodcock Nature Center, Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, Danbury Train Museum, Katonah Museum of Art, Norwalk Aquarium, Stepping Stones Museum for Children, and many more. About an hour from NYC, New Haven, Hartford, Poughkeepsie, etc. Lots of great hiking and opportunities for boating, fishing, horseback riding, skiing, etc. MetroNorth train service to Yankee Stadium is available.		

VIII. REMUNERATION

INDICATE EITHER A SPECIFIC FIGURE OR A SPECIFIC RANGE. The "Proposed Salary" section should read, for example, "\$60,000-\$70,000" or "the minimum salary base is \$60,000" or "the maximum salary is \$80,000." PLEASE DO NOT WRITE "negotiable", or "open," or "not yet determined" with no numbers included. Without this information, your position will not be included in the ARJE's placement listings. It is also highly recommended that you NOT list remuneration as a "package."	
PROPOSED SALARY or SALARY RANGE	\$40,000-\$50,000 (PART TIME POSITION)
Percentage of pension (RPB) in addition to salary (15% recommended)	0
Length of original contract (two years recommended)	TBD

STANDARD BENEFITS FOR THE EDUCATOR, IN ADDITION TO SALARY				
Medical-Hospitalization	Moving Allowance	Books & Periodicals		Sabbatical
Major Medical Insurance	Professional Dues	Congregational Membership	Yes	Cell Phone
Dental Insurance	ARJE Conference	Religious School Tuition	Yes	Laptop Computer
Long Term Disability Insurance	URJ Biennial	Early Childhood Tuition		Israel Trips
	Regional URJ Gathering			
Other (please specify)				

Social Security is required by Federal Law

Is this position being listed with any other professional placement service ?	JewishJobs, JewishStaffing, Indeed
If "YES" please indicate which one and the title by which it is being listed	

In making this request to the ARJE PLACEMENT SERVICE, the congregation/institution agrees that it will	
A	In keeping with the high ideals of Reform Judaism, not exclude a candidate from consideration based on age, gender, sexual orientation or marital status;
B	Keep the ARJE Placement Service informed of ALL interviews and their outcomes;
C	Reimburse all travel and related expenses for an Educator invited for an interview;
D	Arrange the terms of its contract and/or letter of agreement with its Educator-Designate following the principles of the document entitled <i>GUIDELINE FOR EDUCATOR CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS</i> ("The Blue Book"), as adopted and recommended May 1988 by the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the National Association of Temple Educators;
E	On acceptance of the contract and/or letter of intent by both the congregation/institution and the Educator-Designate, forward a copy of the contract and/or letter of agreement for the files of the Placement Service, ALL files being confidential.
F	NOTIFY THE ARJE PLACEMENT OFFICE OF THE NAME OF THE EDUCATOR-DESIGNATE WHEN THE SEARCH IS FINALIZED.

Name of person completing this form and position in congregation / institution	David Reiner, Senior Rabbi (with input from Search Committee)
Signature	/S/ David Reiner

CHAIRPERSON OF THE EDUCATOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

NAME	Dr. Diana Friedlander / Tiffany Zezula	POSITION	Education Committee Member & Past President / Board of Trustees & Religious School Parent
STREET ADDRESS	46 Peaceable Street		
CITY, STATE/PROVINCE, ZIP CODE/POSTAL ZONE	Ridgefield, CT 06877		
TELEPHONE NUMBER	203-438-6589	FAX	
E-MAIL			
Resumes of applicants should be sent to the following persons e-mail address(es) (please include more than one e-mail address):			
RSSearch@OurShirShalom.org ; RabbiReiner@OurShirShalom.org			

IF THE CONGREGATION/INSTITUTION HAS A MISSION STATEMENT,
PLEASE ENCLOSE A COPY

Welcome to Our Shir Shalom!

Inclusive and caring, Shir Shalom is a Reform Jewish congregation that strives to inspire all with our traditions of enriching cultural and spiritual experiences: progressive worship, joy through music, relevant education, genuine personal connections and meaningful social action in Northern Westchester and Fairfield counties.

Who We Are (Mission):

We are a vibrant and inclusive community inspired by Jewish values and traditions.

What We Do (Vision):

We honor the diversity of our backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations.

We celebrate our shared values: the study of Torah, participatory worship driven by music, the promotion of lifelong learning, the ongoing project of *Tikkun Olam*, and the work of social justice.

We embrace the responsibility/task of being “a light unto the nations,” building a brighter future for our community and the world.