The course begins late one Thursday afternoon in the fall. Half the students are gathered around two big-screen monitors in the basement-level electronic classroom at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. The other students are gathered around monitors in day school classrooms in the San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego. Once the students are settled in their various environments, I ask them to take out their cell phones and be ready to connect with students at the other sites. I explain that we are going to begin the course with a cocktail party—but unfortunately no cocktails or hors d’oeuvres will be served. I ask the students to imagine that they are at a wedding reception with friends and family who know they are enrolled in DeLeT and are preparing to be Jewish day school teachers. I tell them to circulate and have brief one-on-one conversations, asking each other two questions: “Why are you becoming a teacher?” and “Why are you becoming a Jewish day school teacher?” I tell them to make sure that they call classmates in other locations so that by the end everyone has talked with everyone. I also instruct them to listen carefully to the responses they hear and see if any common themes emerge. When we get back together to process the exercise, the students find it quite easy to identify the common themes. In fact, a single common theme unites all their answers about why they are enrolled in a program to become teachers in Jewish day schools: “I love children.”
Immediately afterwards, I tell them that the goal of the course, “Day School and Society,” is to help them formulate more thoughtful, professional responses rooted in the history, sociology and ideologies of education. In particular, I tell them, we will look at the purposes of schooling in general and the purposes of Jewish day schools in particular so that they can formulate their reasons for becoming teachers in terms of how their work fulfills the purposes of schools. In reflecting on the exercise, I realize that I set them up for shallow responses that first day by setting the exercise in the informal atmosphere of a wedding reception where deep conversation is not the norm. At the close of the course, we repeat the exercise at a Kallah for which all the students travel to Los Angeles and gather in the student lounge. This time, I serve sparkling apple cider and various kinds of nuts. I set the cocktail party at a reception at a professional conference of Jewish educators, and I remind students that we have spent 6 weeks together examining the purposes of Jewish day schools. I again ask them to share with one another why they are becoming Jewish day school teachers and to listen again for common themes. This time they identify many reasons for becoming day school teachers beyond their love of children. They comment that the reasons now sound more professional, that they focus on teaching and learning, that they are concerned with Jewish tradition and community. In short, by the end of the course, students are able to identify motivations for becoming Jewish day school teachers by grounding their answers in an understanding of the “why” of schooling.

Right after the initial cocktail party exercise, on the first day of class, I begin the conversation with them about the purposes of the profession of teaching. I draw on the work of Thomas F. Green published in an ASCD Yearbook from the 1980s. Green wrote that “making ethical sense of professional practice [in education] requires a grasp of the point of the profession.” The point of all professions, he goes on to say, is that “they are practiced in
response to some fundamental human need or social good.” As we explore the point of the profession of Jewish day school teaching in class, students come to understand that the profession for which they are preparing is designed to meet several purposes, and that these purposes can be understood as meeting fundamental human needs and social goods. In teaching the course the second year, I record the list of fundamental human needs and social goods that the students identify. (See Table 1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamental Human Needs</th>
<th>Social Goods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel part of a community</td>
<td>Or hagayim – a voice of values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance to being a good person</td>
<td>Create respectful and active members of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and routine</td>
<td>Understanding of others/tolerance or difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance/to be noticed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about the world in which we live</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The Point of the Profession of Jewish Day School Teaching

It is worth noting two things about this list. First, while the list was generated by asking about the “point of the profession of teaching and Jewish day school teaching,” the ideas the students generated can be understood as purposes that go beyond individual teachers. Some are purposes that schools might try to fulfill. Schools might, for example, strive to help students feel accepted, learn about the world in which they live and/or understand themselves. Each of these ideas is a purpose related to what schools might do to enhance the lives of their students.

Schools might also strive to create respectful members of society who understand others and live with tolerance of difference. These purposes are what schools might do to build better societies. The second thing to notice about the list is that while many if not most of these ideas might apply to any school, some apply specifically to Jewish schools and others might take on a different
nuance when applied to Jewish schools. Jewish schools might see the purpose of being “or lagoyim,” a voice of values in a society at often seems to lack values as a specifically Jewish purpose. They may see the need for community, a universal purpose, from a specifically Jewish perspective. As Harold Schulweis wrote in an introduction to a textbook series on Jewish values, “There is often a unique Jewish path to universal values.” The result of this conversation on the point of the profession, and by extension on the purposes of schooling, is that it is possible to graph purposes on two axes. (See Table 2.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes that address fundamental human needs</th>
<th>Purposes of schooling</th>
<th>Purposes of Jewish day schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purposes that address social goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Four Categories of Purposes**

This heuristic for understanding the purposes of schooling in general and Jewish day schools in particular serves as the foundation for our inquiry into WHY. In a widely-viewed TED Talk and a follow up book about corporate leadership, Simon Sinek makes a compelling case for starting with WHY. He argues that companies and leaders that succeed over time and inspire loyalty are ones that are clear about WHY they do WHAT they do. “WHY,” he states, “provides the clear filter for decision-making.”

What Sinek claims about successful companies and leaders is what Darling-Hammond and Bransford claim about teachers: awareness of the purposes of schooling is a vital guide to decision-making, particularly for novice teachers. “Broad social purposes” they write, “must be considered as a foundation for decision making about what is taught and how it is taught.” In other words, decisions about the formal curriculum (“topics or concepts to be taught”), the enacted curriculum (“the activities, materials and assignments teachers select and develop”) and
the *hidden curriculum* ("that tacitly implements the underlying goals and perceptions schools and teachers hold for students") are all influenced by a school’s and its teachers’ understanding of the school’s purposes.

Darling-Hammond and Bransford go on to say that, “The teacher who lacks clear goals and a sense of purpose is likely to have difficulty making sensible consistent decisions about what to teach, when and how. Yet teachers’ goals must be developed based on more than their own individual interests.” They argue that knowledge of “educational history is important if teachers are to understand the broader social purposes of education, beyond their own personal experiences and views.” They conclude that “Teachers are expected to pursue broadly held purposes for education.”

At least that would be true in a fully rational world. In this ideal world, administrators would translate purposes into practices when they develop schedules, set school culture and decide on special programs for the school to offer. Teachers would translate purposes into practices when they select content, plan learning activities, and organize life inside the walls of their classrooms. While administrators and teachers often succeed at translating purposes into practices, they are at times constrained by the regularities of schools (Sarason) and the grammar of schooling (Tyack and Cuban).

This research explores the ways Jewish day school administrators and teachers develop practices that reflect purposes. We examine the perspective of aspiring Jewish day school teachers enrolled in the DeLeT program at Hebrew Union College, the only accredited California State credential program under Jewish auspices, as they study in the required credential course.

*Throughout the paper the terms “regularity” from Sarason and “elements of the grammar of schooling” from Tyack and Cuban will be used interchangeably.*
Day School and Society. We examine their emerging perspectives on the purposes of schooling in general and the purposes of Jewish day schools in particular. We pay particular attention to the way schools and teachers relate to the regularities of schools, first identified by Seymour Sarason as the main obstacle to change in school, and the grammar of schooling, subsequently identified by David Tyack and Larry Cuban as the main cause of the failure of school reform. As Tyack and Cuban explain, “Little has changed in the ways school divide time and space, classify students and allocate them to classrooms, splinter knowledge into ‘subjects,’ and award grades and ‘credits’ as evidence of learning.” They quote Dewey’s warning against “dismissing the way schools are organized ‘as something comparatively external and indifferent to educational purposes and ideals.’” We will examine the relationship between the regularities of the ways schools are organized and the ways schools and teachers strive to enact practices that reflect their purposes.

**Research Method and Data Sources**

The inquiry into this relationship follows the canons of practitioner research, often called “classroom inquiry” or “teacher research.” I am both researcher and professor, and I have taught “Day School and Society” to aspiring Jewish day school teachers in DeLeT for the past two years. I inherited the course from a colleague who left our institution to become head of school of a Jewish day school*. She is a sociologist and taught “Day School and Society” as a course in the sociology of Jewish education with particular emphasis on issues of Jewish identity, hybridity, and dissonance. As I studied the lesson plans, readings and handouts that she generously bequeathed to me upon her departure, I realized that the course was taught “in her

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* Tali Zelkowicz is currently head of school at the Columbus Jewish Day School.
and that I would need to create a course in my voice. As a veteran professor who spent the last decade-and-a-half in academic administration, it had been many years since I created a new course. I used the opportunity to study my practice. I took detailed notes on my planning process as I conceptualized the course. As I taught the course the first year I focused on what I would need to revise to be more successful the second year. When I taught the course the second year, I kept notes about each class session and collected focused reflections from the students.

As a key element of the research, I analyzed student work on 3 assignments from the second cohort of students I taught. One assignment, or more accurately one set of assignments, included weekly prompts using a variety of techniques asking students to identify their “take aways” from the lessons. For example, the first prompt, “3-2-1,” asked them to identify 3 ideas they were taking away from the class, 2 questions they were wondering about and 1 feeling they had. A “webquest” at the end of another lesson asked students to look at their school’s website and to discover how the school presents its purposes. I analyzed these assignments to look for patterns in students’ evolving understanding of the purposes of schooling and the purposes of Jewish day schools.

I also analyzed the “museum artifacts” they produced in response to another assignment. They were assigned to bring two artifacts from the schools in which they are interns, one artifact representing how the school fulfills one of its purposes as a school and one representing how it fulfills one of its purposes as a Jewish day school. They also produced an “account” (a museum tag) to explain what the artifact reveals about one of the school’s purposes. The accounts revealed how practices reflect purposes.

*I adopt this phrase from my colleague Miriam Heller Stern who took over another course from the departing professor.*
The third assignment I analyzed was the final synthetic assignment. The first year I taught the course, the assignment was a blog in which students were to explain “Why I Am a Jewish Day School Teacher.” In looking over the students’ responses I realized, a) the assignment was redundant since they had answered the question orally in the final “cocktail party,” b) I had not given them specific guidelines to focus their attention on the purposes of schooling, and c) the short 250-word limit did not afford them the opportunity to explain their reasons for becoming day school teachers in any depth. For the second year I revised the assignment and asked students to write a letter to a head of a school to which they were applying for a job explaining why they are becoming Jewish day school teachers. In order to prompt students to address the purposes of schooling in the four categories identified in Table 2, I added explicit instructions to “explain what you hope to accomplish for your students and how you hope your work will have an impact on the community/society. You should root your answers in your understanding of the purposes of schooling and Jewish day schools.”

In order to signal to students that it is not always easy for a teacher to achieve the purposes he or she sets out to achieve, I added a dimension to the assignment that was missing from the blog assignment: “You should also express at least one challenge Jewish day schools face and how you as a day school teacher might help the school address the challenge(s).” In retrospect (and in planning for future iterations of this assignment), I realize that the “challenge” should focus their attention on a specific type of challenge: challenges schools face in striving to achieve their purposes.

In addition to analyzing student work, I collected two additional sets of data: responses to a survey and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. These were conducted 3 months after the conclusion of the course. All 9 of the students in the second cohort responded to the survey.
(They were given time in one of the other DeLeT classes to respond.) Seven of the 9 agreed to the interview.

Throughout the analysis, the research question loomed large: “In what ways does the grammar of Jewish day schooling day schools facilitate and inhibit enacting practices that reflect the purposes of Jewish day schools?” We begin by examining how the aspiring teachers see their schools’ purposes enacted in practices at the schools.

**Purposes and Practices**

All 9 of students in the second cohort that I taught completed the survey, and all 9 of them said that their school succeeds in fulfilling its purposes as a school (5 said it succeeds very well; 4 said it succeeds but not very well). Similarly, they all said that their school succeeds at fulfilling its purposes as a Jewish school. Again, 5 said their schools succeed very well; 4 said they succeed but not very well. (It is interesting to note that 3 of the students ranked their school as “succeeding very well” achieving its purposes as both a school and a Jewish day school; 2 ranked their school as “succeeding, but not very well” achieving its purposes in both areas; and 4 had different answers for the 2 sets of purposes.) (See table 3.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>How well do you think the school succeeds in fulfilling its purposes as a school?</th>
<th>How well do you think the school succeeds in fulfilling its purposes as a Jewish day school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarit</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
<td>Succeeds very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
<td>Succeeds, but not very well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Student Perception of How Well Their Schools Succeed at Fulfilling Their Purposes
It is perhaps not surprising that aspiring teachers are reluctant to look at the schools where they are spending so much time (3 full days and 2 half days each week all year long) and where they hope to be hired as teachers next year and say it is not succeeding at fulfilling its purposes.

section on the aspiring teachers’ emerging understanding of the purposes of schooling and the purposes of Jewish day school and how those purposes are reflected in practices they have observed in their schools

**Insert here**

**Purposes, Practices and the Grammar of Schooling**

In the literature on school reform, the “regularities” of school culture (Sarason) and the “grammar of schooling” (Tyack and Cuban) are cited as major impediments to change. In the course on Day School and Society, students did not learn about the grammar of schooling, and none of the assignments nor the survey or interview questions asked about the grammar of schooling. Yet many of the examples students gave of how they, their mentor teachers or their schools translate purposes into practices can be understood as cases of not following the “rules” of the grammar of schooling. In order to understand the examples provided by the aspiring teachers it is helpful to have a more detailed understanding of the regularities of school life that make up the grammar of schooling. Table 4 lists the elements of the grammar of schooling identified by Tyack and Cuban followed by elements described by the aspiring teachers in their accounts of how the educational practices they observed reflect their schools’ purposes.
## Elements grammar of schooling identified by Tyack and Cuban

- Ways schools divide time and space
- Ways schools classify students and allocate them to classrooms
- Ways schools splinter knowledge into “subjects”
- Ways schools award grades and “credits” as evidence of learning

### Elements of grammar of schooling of all schools including Jewish day schools mentioned by aspiring teachers

- Cancelling school for American (Canadian) holidays
- Many academic subjects and “specialties” (the arts/technology/physical education)
- Separate periods for each subject
- Material needs to be covered
- Students grouped together by grade
- Students move from elementary school to middle school
- Standardized tests used to assess students and the school
- Students of many ability levels in class together
- Schools meet Mondays-Fridays
- School meets from morning (8:30 or 9:00) to mid-afternoon (2:30-3:30)
- One lead teacher in each elementary school classroom

### Elements of grammar of schooling of Jewish day schools mentioned by aspiring teachers

- Cancelling school for Jewish holidays
- Separate periods for academic subjects, specialties, and Hebrew/Jewish studies
- Homogeneity of student body: All (or vast majority) of students are Jewish
- Different teachers for general studies and Jewish studies/Hebrew

### Table 4. Elements of the Grammar of Schooling

Esther and Marilyn both described situations in which their schools did not adhere to the regularity of schools closing for holidays in order to pursue important purposes. It is a regularity of schools in America to cancel school in observance of American holidays like Veterans’ Day and Martin Luther King Day, and it is a regularity for Jewish day schools to take off for major Jewish holidays including the High Holy Days and the first and last day of Sukkot. Esther, wrote that, “On Veterans’ Day instead of cancelling school and having a holiday, my school observed Veterans’ day by having Veterans come to school and talk with the students about their
experiences in service.” She identified this practice as a way for the school to enact one of its purposes, connecting Jewish and American identities. From what Esther wrote, it appears that the veterans were Jewish veterans: “The school recognized Veterans’ Day in their own way to bring harmony between these two identities (American and Jewish).”

Marilyn described how her school, a Reform day school, was open on the first day of Sukkot (and not just on Hol HaMo-ed, the intermediary days).

A purpose of a Jewish day school, an important purpose, is to teach children about their heritage. To teach them what it means to be Jewish, and to teach them at least what observance is about….They (the school’s administrators) found out that when they closed school for Chagim, or closed school the day before Yom Kippur, they found that families just use that as an excuse for like a longer weekend trip to somewhere. So they decided to keep school open, including on Chagim, but they do activities where they invite the parents, and they do like a whole Sukkot activity.

In both these cases, the students reported that the schools consciously made the decision to be “ungrammatical” by going against one of the regularities of schooling in order to enact one of the purposes of the school. In the first case, Veteran’s Day offered an opportunity to provide children with role models of Jewish veterans who live out their identities as Jews and as Americans. Preparing children for hybrid identities is one of the school’s purposes. In the other case, the school stayed open on Sukkot because school leaders decided that the school could fulfill one of its purposes, teaching about Jewish observance, by staying open and offering students and their families a chance to observe the Chag rather than closing for the Chag as the grammar of school would have them do.

Another school regularity is dividing time in school into periods and assigning specific times to academic subjects as well as specialties like the arts, technology, and physical education (and Hebrew/Judaica in Jewish day schools). Students described how their schools go beyond
this regularity to assure that socio-emotional learning is treated like a “subject” and has a designated slot in the weekly schedule and is even part of the report card.

When asked to express their schools’ purposes in their own words, the aspiring teachers frequently included socio-emotional learning in their descriptions of purposes. Marilyn wrote, “The school’s purposes as a school is to teach children not just subject matter content, but also how to learn, regulate emotions, develop social skills/relationships, and be informed citizens” (emphasis added). Denise wrote that her “school’s purpose is to foster independent and critical thinkers, lifelong learning, self-awareness and compassion” (emphasis added). Marilyn said her school’s purpose was simply “to teach children to be mensches.”

Two of the aspiring teachers reported that the schools in which they serve their internships allotted time during the weekly schedule to socio-emotional learning. Marilyn reported that “in terms of social emotional learning, we actually have that as a designated period once a week... It’s literally on our daily schedule as a social emotional class. So we do activities just for that.” I asked whether students receive grades for this “subject.” Marilyn’s answered that “We don't do grades in the lower grades, but it is ... I believe it is a component on the report cards where we address it.”

Rachel, who also identified social-emotional learning as one of her school’s purposes, said, “We have assemblies that we talk about value (sic!). It’s Jewish values, but it’s also social-emotional values. Then we have the counselors that come to the class and she gives workshops about bullying and integrity.... It’s ongoing. We have her once a week.”

Yet another regularity of schooling is that children are grouped together in grades with other children close to their age. Esther reported that her school took a different route in
pursuing a suite of related purposes: “to prepare children for the real world, and to educate children to care for others, and the children should hope to improve the world and stand up for causes that are important to them.” She described a semester-long “Passion Project”:

We have this project called Passion Projects where students are put into groups according to what issues are most important to them. I'm leading a group on sustainable energy, and my group is trying to figure out ... we're first trying to learn more about what sustainable energy is. What is the larger implication in the world, how sustainable energy can help our world, what are its downsides? We're kind of guiding our own research based on our questions, and students ... it's ranging from kindergarten all the way until ... or, first grade all the way until sixth grade.

When I asked her to explain about having children from first through sixth grade learning together, she told me:

They're all together, so they have to learn how to interact with each other. They have to problem-solve. It takes science, it takes artistic creativity, communication skills, and it really encompasses every single strength of the child.

She went on to explain that this project also fulfills another purpose of the school beyond the social justice purposes she had already identified: “to harness a child's multiple intelligences.”

Here then is an example of the school deciding to forego the regularity of keeping children together by grade, at least for part of each week, in order to pursue both social justice purposes (Jewish purposes for the benefit of society in the conceptualization of purposes in Table 2) and educational purposes around multiple intelligences (general purposes for the benefit of the individual children according to the heuristic in Table 2).

A more complicated example of how the grammar of schooling interacts with schools’ purposes deals with the purpose many Jewish day school have of preparing children to live as Americans and as Jews or, as Jonathan Sarna states, how to “confront the most fundamental
question of American Jewish life: how to live in two worlds at once, how to be both American and Jewish, part of the larger American society and apart from it.” The most common strategy for addressing this purpose, especially in Reform, community and sometimes in Conservative day school, is integration. Malkus points out that there are many ways of looking at integration, most notably paradigms suggested by Pomson and Zeldin. In terms of a strategy for fulfilling the purpose of preparing children to live as American Jews, we will use a more general definition: any attempts to bring general studies and Jewish studies into relationship with one another. The regularities of schools that make integration challenging are that each subject is assigned a different period of time on the school, that there is a great deal of material that needs to be covered in each subject, and that in many schools there are different teachers for general studies and Jewish studies/Hebrew. The first two regularities are often expressed by teachers (and were explained by the aspiring teachers in this study) as “There’s not enough time.”

The aspiring teachers frequently made reference to time and schedule as challenges to translating purposes into teaching practices. Emily talked about one of the purposes of her school being to make “connections between the Jewish and the secular.” She went on to say that “a challenge is of course time, and we’re already fighting the clock with Hebrew and Judaics and everything else.” For Emily, a curriculum filled with general studies, Jewish studies and Hebrew leaves little time to fulfill the school’s purpose of showing relationships between the general and the Jewish.

In contrast, Marilyn looks at integration as part of the solution to the time crunch brought on by the grammar of schooling. “I feel strongly that the integrated curriculum can enhance learning; for example, students learn critical thinking strategies as well as how to grapple with difficult text to discern the author’s intent and bias when they study Tanakh and Talmud.”
Amanda recognized the regularity of limited time during the school day as a challenge to implementing several of the school’s purposes: to prepare students “so they may become contributing members of society,” to “teach my students that social and emotional well-being as an individual and community is vital to a healthy life,” and to foster an “emotional connection to Torah.” She writes that “One way in which I hope to overcome this obstacle is by integrating the general studies with Judaic studies. I want to my students that skills are skills and can be applied to any subject across the board. Critical thinking should be applied to every subject from math to science to literature and Judaic studies.”

Integration is thus a double-edged sword. One regularity of schooling is that knowledge is “splintered into ‘subjects’” and each subject is assigned time during the week. When integration is seen as yet another area of knowledge to be taught, the challenge of limited time brought on by multiple regularities presents an obstacle to realizing the purpose of showing students connections between Jewish life and American life. When integration is seen as a way of teaching and reinforcing skills and knowledge across the curriculum, integration becomes a strategy for using time efficiently to accomplish several purposes simultaneously (e.g. teaching critical thinking and Tanakh).

**What We Can Learn From These Aspiring Teachers**

The aspiring teachers in this study gave several examples of how schools succeed in translating their purposes into practices is by going against the limitations imposed by the grammar of schooling. The question is why, if Sarason and Tyack and Cuban are correct that the regularities of schools and the grammar of schooling inhibit schools from doing things in ways
that are different from the norm, were these aspiring teacher able to see so many example of schools not being constrained by the grammar of schooling.

One might speculate that the Jewish day schools where these aspiring interns are serving their internships feel free to ignore some of the rules of the grammar of schooling precisely because they are part of the universe of “independent” schools (at least in the United States) and are free of most government mandates. But as Sarason pointed out almost 50 years ago it is the culture of schools and not government mandates that keep schools from changing. Judaism by its nature, especially outside Israel where it is not the norm, has always been countercultural. And Jewish day schools outside the orthodox community are non-normative and as such are by their very existence counter-cultural. Perhaps this is one reason why these Jewish days schools seem free to use their independence to act differently than the culture of schools would have them act, at least in some cases. Where they do act differently, they succeed in translating their purposes into practices.

What this analysis suggests is that if schools want to be even more successful in translating their purposes into practices, there are a few steps they can take. First, they can take a long and careful look at the purposes they are pursuing both as schools and as Jewish day schools. Simon Sinek’s admonition to “Start with WHY” can guide schools in this process. While the students in Day School and Society looked at their schools’ mission statements as one source for understanding their school’s purposes, most mission statements do not provide sufficient detail and clarity to guide administrators and teachers in making the endless string of decisions they have to make in order to translate purposes into practices. The audience for mission statements is frequently the public (which is why they are so often placed on websites);
the audience for thoughtfully crafted WHY statements can be the professionals who need specific guidance in decision-making.

Second, schools can engage in serious deliberation about HOW to translate purposes into practices. In particular, administrators and teachers need to examine the regularities of schooling as they’ve experienced them in the past and the grammar of schooling as they understand it both from their own schooling and from their professional preparation and experience. Then they can engage in a “limiting assumptions” exercise (see Aron, A Congregation of Learners) to question which of the elements of the grammar of schooling that they have always accepted as immutable may in fact be amenable to change. In this process, it is important that schools keep front and center the idea that they are independent schools and that can select which elements of the grammar of schooling can help them achieve their purposes and which do not. The aspiring teachers in this study report on the ways in which their schools do not adhere to the regularities of the culture of school. Schools seeking to be more effective in fulfilling their purposes can give themselves the same license whenever doing so would facilitate achieving their purposes.

Finally, a caveat: The process of translating purposes into practices in Jewish day schools is not as mechanical and linear as this analysis has sometimes made it seem. Classrooms are populated by wonderful human beings we call teachers and children. At times they act rationally, calmly and with agency; at other times they act impulsively or without understanding. And of course other adults who, even though they may not be present in classrooms at every moment, also play a role: parents, board members and administrators, each of whom may have their own agendas and biases. While this multiplicity of actors may make school change seem hopelessly complex, the aspiring teachers in this study provide a glimpse of the possible. They shared with us several examples of when they, their master teachers or their schools successfully
translated carefully identified purposes into effective educational practices even when doing so did not adhere to the grammar of schooling. There are no doubt many more examples that they could have shared but did not.

One of the aspiring teachers, Emily, captured the complexity and the promise of enacting purposes when she said:

I think there's a difference between a school's purpose and a teacher's purpose. And I think my purpose as a future teacher is to fulfill these purposes of a school, but in a way that really nurtures my students' souls, and makes them want to wake up every morning and go to school in a really loving and empowering way so that they will be advocates for themselves, as well as people who can't. So I have these purposes that I stand behind because of where I am at a school, but I also have my own personal purpose as a teacher to these students.

There may not be a linear path from identifying purposes to translating purposes into practices that either take advantage of the regularities of schooling or violate the rules of the grammar of schooling, but as these aspiring teachers show us, it is possible to find ways to make sure that the HOW of schooling matches the WHYs that school leaders deem most significant. Day schools will be more successful at doing that when they summon the thoughtfulness and the courage to free themselves and their teachers from the constraints of the grammar of schooling so they can pursue their purposes most effectively.