LeCHeT Curriculum Project
A Framework
January 2016

Vision

The integration of the teaching of social justice, social responsibility, social change and philanthropy into the core curriculum of Grades 1 to 8 through the development of curriculum that can be used/adapted by any school or school board in Canada.

Educational Philosophy

The curriculum and supporting resources will be informed by principles that are the foundation of a strong Jewish education and will be recognized as universal principles for all Canadians.

- **Inspire**: students should feel a sense of social responsibility and understand it to be an integral part of their own identities and heritage.

- **Empower**: students should feel confident in their ability to advocate for positive social change, through service and philanthropy

- **Integrate**: Social responsibility should be woven into every appropriate aspect of the wider educational curriculum, and be expressed through different disciplines, modalities and communal activities. Social responsibility should not be an abstract idea. The teaching and learning must be connected to the real world in ways that are tangible and evident to the learners.

Scope

We have an ambitious vision for this curriculum project, which will be realized in phases over a ten-year period.

Phase 1: Research and development by a multi-stakeholder team
Phase 2: Writing of pilot modules
Phase 3: Teacher Training and Testing of pilot modules at Leo Baeck
Phase 4: Writing of additional modules
Phase 5: Teacher Training and Testing of new modules at Leo Baeck
Phase 6: Testing of revised modules in other partner schools
Phase 7: Development of website and tools to make curriculum widely available
Phase 8: Marketing of curriculum across Canada

Rationale

The proponents believe that the teaching of social justice and the acquisition of skills related to social change, citizenship and philanthropy are fundamental to preparing students to take their place as citizens in a world order that is complex and often conflicted.

Leo Baeck's mission is focused on ensuring students develop their full capacity as critical thinkers and are equipped to participate actively in an increasingly globally connected and technological world. It is committed to developing leaders who understand the value of social conscience and how to contribute to positive social change. LB students will embrace their responsibility to participate in acts of tzedakah, tikkun olam and other personal mitzvot

By leading the development of this curriculum, LB can further consolidate its position as a leader in the writing and programming of social justice education. As well, this curriculum will enhance the Service and Action requirements of the School's International Baccalaureate program in Grades 6-8.

Project Development/Testing Site

As a progressive religious day school founded as part of the Reform Jewish Movement, Leo Baeck is committed to the core values of that Movement. The school has a proven track record of recognizing the diversity of its community and making room for a wide spectrum of social and political views, practices, and identities.

Given the school's mission and history and the commitment of its leadership to this project, it is well place to be the home for the development and testing of this curriculum project.

Key Concepts for the Curriculum Design

This curriculum will be founded upon the following concepts:

Tikkun Olam: Chief among these core values is *Tikkun Olam,* repairing the world. Through study, empathy for others and an active participation in areas of social concern in Canada and throughout the world, we fulfill our Jewish obligation to repair the world.

Tikkun Hanefesh: Tikkun Olam begins with *Tikkun HaNefesh*, the cultivation of respect for self and others, and the confidence to make a positive impact on the world. Through building up our own sense of compassion we come to recognize that each life matters.

Tikkun HaAm: Tikkun Olam must include a commitment to *Tikkun HaAm*, issues of particular concern to the State of Israel and the Jewish world.

See the *Guiding Principles* document in Appendix 1. While these concepts will be foundational for the curriculum, the language and materials will need to be adapted to allow broad adoption by other denominational and public schools.

Principles of Curriculum Design

The project will be guided by the following principles of excellence in curriculum design:

- Alignment and Coherence - all parts of the curriculum must be logically consistent with each other. There must be a "match" or a fit between parts.

- Scope - the range or extent of "content" (whether information to be learned, skills to be acquired etc.) that will be included in a course or program. It must be sufficient to lead learners to achieve the program or course outcomes. However, there is a constant tension between breadth and depth when considering scope. In general, when deep learning is required, "lean" is best.

- Sequence - is the ordering of learning experiences so that learners build on previous experiences and move to broader, deeper or more complex understandings and applications. Common ways of sequencing content within courses include simple to complex, wholes to parts (or part to wholes), prerequisite abilities, and chronological.

- Continuity - refers to the vertical repetition of major curriculum elements in different courses over time (also known as vertical organization or articulation). It is important to identify the themes or skills that need to run through a program and to map how they will be addressed at each level.

- Integration - refers to the horizontal relationship among major curriculum components at any given point in time (also known as horizontal organization). Integration fosters reinforcement of key learning and is needed to promote application of learning across course boundaries.

- Economy – focuses on an in-depth study of a limited number of important topics will have a more lasting effect than a course that tries to cover too many disconnected bits and pieces of information.

- Outcomes-based - defines course outcomes to focus on results, with multiple indicators (assessments) of performance.

- Measurement – includes authentic assessments that will encourage originality, insightfulness, and problem-solving, along with master of important information.

- Participatory learning - courses will encourage active involvement and get students "doing" early in the course rather than studying all the principles and basics prior to performing.

- Appropriate – written clearly for target Grade and language levels

The figure below illustrates the qualities of this curriculum will have (OBE = outcomes-based learning).
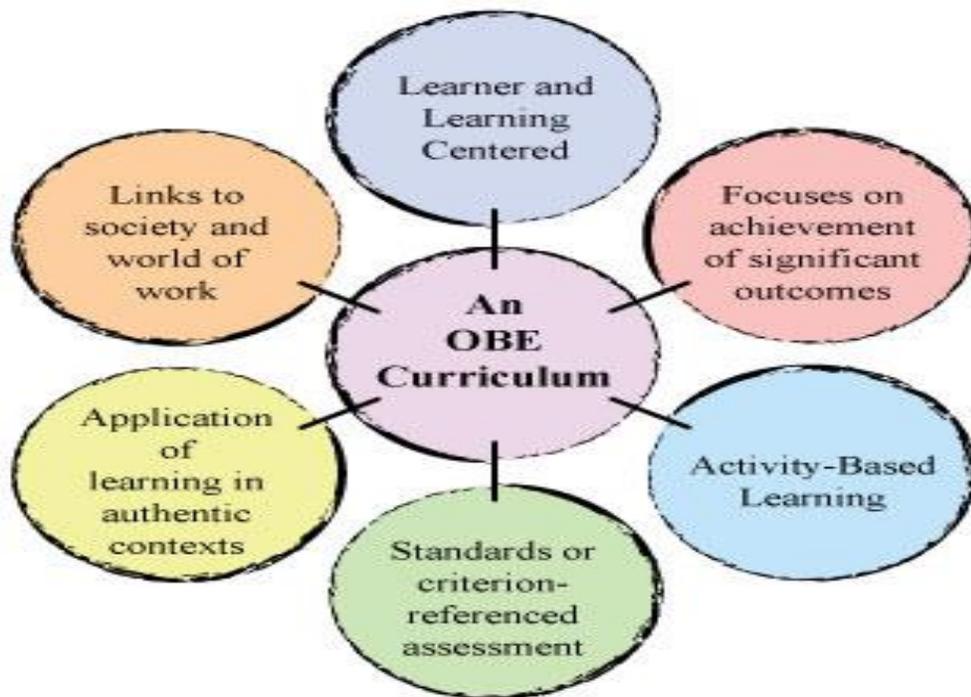
See Appendix 2 for additional frameworks to guide curriculum design.

Example

[Engage a qualified person to develop a single lesson or module for a specified grade that will allow readers to see what the curriculum might look like]

Project Leadership

The project led by the LeCHet Fellow, who will be a full-time employee of the LBDS. The Fellow will be a curriculum development specialist with demonstrated skills in project management and teacher training. A draft job description is attached in Appendix 3.

Budget

[Need to develop a detailed budget, ideally for three years covering the following items.]

- Salary and benefits
- Stipends for resources persons (e.g. writer, editor, graphic designer, etc.)
- Expenses for project advisory committee meetings
- Expenses for consultations with experts, resource persons, partners
- Development/printing of materials for piloting
- Expenses for Teacher Training
- Development of online and web-based components
- Office expenses
- Computer equipment

Note: A bequest will cover the costs of the LeCHeT program for up to ten years. While the bequest will become available to the School upon the death of the donor, a plan is under development to put bridge funding in place in the interim. As well, it is anticipated that LB will build this project into its fundraising program so that other interested donors can participate.

Implementation

The timing and implementation of this project will depend on available funds.
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Date	Deliverable	Lead
Winter/spring 2016	• Board approval in principle • Establish Project Advisory Committee • Development of a detailed proposal	• ANB/EP • ANB/EP • TBD
Summer/fall 2016	• Hire Fellow • Research Phase	• EP • Fellow
Winter/spring 2017	• Develop pilot curriculum for one grade level • Teacher training	• Fellow • Lead teacher(s)
Fall 2017	• Pilot curriculum • Develop pilot for next grade level	• Lead teacher(s) • Fellow
Winter/spring 2018	• Pilot curriculum • Develop pilot for next grade level	• Lead teacher • Fellow
Summer 2018	• Share results with interested schools	• Fellow
Fall 2018	• Develop pilot curriculum for one grade level • Teacher training	•
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Project Advisory Committee

A team of 5-7 qualified individuals with expertise in curriculum development, social justice work and teaching who would meet monthly to advise the Fellow, provide feedback on plans and pilot materials and respond to issues arising.

Potential members could include: Lead teacher(s) from LB, Todd Ross (Aboriginal Affairs), Sara Hildebrand (Children and social engagement), Anita Khanna (Child Poverty), Mary Jo Leddy (Refugees), Caroline Bennett (Aboriginal Affairs, Civic Engagement), Pekka Sinervo (Technology), Michael Cooke (Education Policy, Curriculum Development, and Project Management). [Add suggestions re Environment and Health].

Considerations

- The vision for a Jewish education is inspiring and powerful. It provides a strong overarching framework for the project. However, the language and references will need to be enlarged if the curriculum is to be used by non-Jewish schools.
- Likely, many elements inherent in the vision and guiding principles are already present in existing school curricula. The curriculum needs to complement and build on these. Caution re redundancy.

Appendix 1: Guiding Principles

Appendix 2: Some Common Curriculum Frameworks

There are a number of different frameworks one might adopt to guide curriculum development. The Fellow and the Advisory Committee should consider the commonly accepted frameworks and recommend the one that is most appropriate for this project.

- Subject or Discipline-Centered - the curriculum is organized around separate, specific subjects or disciplines. For example anatomy (subject) or life sciences (discipline)

- Broad Fields - the curriculum is organized to cut across subject lines and to emphasize relationships between subjects. It usually if organized into a 3 to 5 fields. For example, fields for technical career learning, professional and personal growth, supporting sciences, etc.

- Spiral - the curriculum is organized around key concepts/skills that are introduced and revisited for deeper understanding as the learner moves through the program of study

- Inquiry or Problem-Based - the curriculum is organized around a set of problems or areas of inquiry.

- Experiential - learners engage is a set of experiences and then are helped to process and draw meaning from them.

- Outcome-Based Curriculum - Students need to be able to "show what they know"—to demonstrate achievement of these learning outcomes. Some of the concepts and principles linked to outcomes-based curriculum design can guide our work. See Appendix 4.

Here are some sample questions to guide the selection of a framework:

- Why is this curriculum needed? What is the rationale for the curriculum?
- What are students expected to know and to be able to do?
- Are there standards or expectations from accrediting bodies that need to be considered in this curriculum?
- How does this curriculum relate to others in the grade/school? Elsewhere?
- How to ensure the curriculum is integrated into the overall objectives for each grade?
- Who are the learners and what are their learning needs?
- Who are the groups and individuals that should be consulted as we develop this curriculum?

Appendix 3: Job Description for Curriculum Development Specialist

Role

To support the analysis, planning, and evaluation of the curriculum and to engage teachers and eventually other schools.

Description of Duties and Tasks

- Researches the field to discover existing relevant material and solicits s experts to participate defining the curriculum development plan.
- Assists in the development of objectives, outcomes, content scope, and sequence for projects.
- Facilitates curriculum development sessions, documents findings, and writes draft curriculum.
- Writes and/or ensures the development of appropriate resources and teaching supports.
- Identifies objectives and content for instructional media, online and web components and oversees the development of these components.
- In consultation with teachers and administrators, identifies measurable outcomes and objectives and integrates curriculum according to accepted policies and procedures.
- Develops and leads training workshops for lead teachers.
- Enters data into database, and maintains files and records.

Knowledge and Experience

Broad knowledge of the principles and practices of current educational trends in curriculum and instruction; comprehensive knowledge of the methods, materials, procedures, and practices of curriculum design; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, resource persons and potential partners; ability to manage fiscal, physical, and human resources to successfully carry out the function and programs of the office; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. Specific skills/experience include:

- Research and analysis of curriculum materials
- Processes and standards for planning and implementing professional development.
- Instructional strategies, curriculum standards, and assessment skills
- Superior interpersonal and communications skills.
- Project management and efficient use of resources.

Appendix 4: Outcomes-Based Curriculum Design

The High Success Network (1992) defines Outcomes-Based Education as "...defining, organizing, focusing, and directing all aspects of a curriculum on the things we want all learners to demonstrate successfully when they complete the program".

Outcomes-based education is a student-centered, results oriented design premised on the belief that all individuals can learn. The strategy of OBE implies the following:

- What students are to learn is clearly identified
- Each student's progress is based on demonstrated achievement
- Each student's learning needs are addressed through multiple instructional strategies and assessment tools
- Each student is provided time and assistance to realize his/her potential.

Some Key Concepts and Principles of Curriculum in an OBE Context

The focus is on results of learning. What learners are expected to learn is clearly identified, expressed as learning outcomes and known to all. Expectations are clear and public.

Curriculum and instruction maintains a clear focus on culminating outcomes—the performances learners must demonstrate to graduate. These are significant performances critical for success in life and work.

Design down (from the performances expected of graduates) and deliver up. Courses and learning experiences are focused and built to help learners achieve the learning outcomes.

Create learning opportunities to help different learners achieve learning outcomes. Learning experiences are activity-based and allow learners to apply and practise what they learn. There can be multiple paths to the achievement of the learning outcomes. OBE suggests that expanded opportunity and flexible paths promote success.

Assessment is standards-referenced and matches the learning outcomes. Learners show that they can perform the learning outcome. Learner progress and the earning of credit is based in a demonstration of the achievement of learning outcomes