

SJCC Seattle Timeline

September 2011:

Before the first retreat, we read *Schools that Heal*, renewing our commitment to Emotionally Responsive Practice, as "receptive, motivated learning requires a foundation of emotional well-being." We were inspired by our initial fellowship retreat to reflect more deeply on details and engage in tough conversations with one another as colleagues, and with families. This has made the bigger picture more cohesive.

October 2011:

We asked for more parent volunteers to help keep the school running smoothly. Teachers committed to more all-school meetings, on Monday mornings for Havdallah and all-school Shabbat on Friday afternoons and once a month on Friday mornings. We read *A Letter in the Scroll*, thinking deeply about what it means to be in Jewish Early Childhood Education. Through our introduction to concepts of appreciative inquiry, conversations about difficult moments are approached with a spirit of inquiry and seeds for change.

November 2011:

The ways teachers are supported in classrooms has shifted; teachers are more creative and helpful to one another. The leadership team is more responsive to teachers' needs, both in the moment and long term.

December 2011:

Faculty is more collaborative and administration is more receptive to tough feedback, knowing that reflection is an instrumental element in growth and change. We read *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink, which we intend to use in a parent-teacher book group to continue developing a shared language of values.

January 2012:

Begin utilizing iPad in classrooms to videotape children's small-group work, and utilizing video as a tool for teacher reflection and growth. We read *The Leader in Me* by Stephen Covey.

February 2012:

Following Daniel Pink's blog, we remember to "only speak human," rather than dry corporate-speak, whether in emails or in person, as we work with humans.

March 2012:

Start reflective supervision: We begin to meet regularly with teachers individually, in teacher-directed meetings with mentor. For our Spring Community Night, we

showed the documentary "Race to Nowhere," facilitating conversation with teachers and families about the purpose of education.

April 2012:

Inspired by *Mind in the Making*, we are now more conscious of children's development (such as showing empathy) and making it more visible in documentation. Dara travels to Reggio Emilia, Italy, bringing back elements that inspire her and push her thinking. Through conversations with teachers in small-group and individual meetings, she shares insight from her trip that is relevant to the individual or to the work at hand.

May 2012:

Begin to hold monthly, all-faculty meetings. These are unpaid, optional meetings. The agenda is set by the faculty and led by faculty representatives. When appropriate, someone from the leadership team attends as well. So far the attendance is low, but we hope there will be more interest in the future.

June 2012:

Heather, Education Coordinator, leaves the J. The J chooses to temporarily eliminate this leadership team position. Jennifer attends the NAREA conference, and other teachers attend conferences throughout the school year, demonstrating a continued commitment to ongoing professional development (as reflected in the school's budget).

July 2012:

New faculty is hired. Work done within the leadership team helps clarify who we are as a school so that we ensure the new faculty is a good fit. New ideas are shared about how to better reflect our school philosophy in our outdoor spaces. Teachers start to bring decorations to the playground and breezeway.

August 2012:

Eli steps down as director and a search for a new director begins. Professional development is lead mostly by teachers from both campuses. More time is given to set up classrooms and beautify the school. Common spaces are created. A dedicated faculty lounge is created, with adequate space and light for relaxing/reflection, as well as designated work stations for documentation and class prep. A dedicated meeting space is created so that the teacher space can be set aside as sacred space. We invite Mark Horowitz to be part of our professional development week, focusing in on *b'tzelem elokim*, the notion that each person (child, teacher, parent, person within our JCC, community member) contains a divine spark. How do we find that spark in people with whom it's most difficult to connect?

September 2012:

Reflective supervision meetings are put in place for individual faculty members to meet with his or her mentor twice a month. All-school Shabbat gets a boost by including the music specialist to play guitar and sing. Staff is more forthcoming with feedback now that they feel more comfortable with the leadership team and relationships among faculty members. Dana Weiner takes on the role of interim director. The teacher planning schedule shifts, testing out a schedule that allows for some individual planning time as well as some planning time with one's co-teacher. Emily adds more clinical hours to the teacher requirements. Small groups focus on each group's interests. Dara writes an article about metacognition, which she shares with faculty, along with Alise Shafer Ivey's TED talk, originally shared by Diana Ganger. Dara advocates with CEO and COO of the JCC on behalf of the ECS.

October 2012:

The search for a new director continues. Dara takes on more responsibilities as she and Dana together fill in the role of the director. Teachers increase collaborative efforts, especially among teachers who work with children in the same age groups. Teachers create more community gatherings around Jewish holidays and common/shared rituals in same-age classrooms and school-wide. The teacher lounge becomes more of a gathering place. The Day of Dialogue conference was attended by 15 faculty members, and this has a resonating impact on the curriculum. We read *The Fifth Discipline* and *Bambini* pushed to think the many systems in play throughout the school and larger agency. Dara begins a faculty library and check-out system, valuing the scholarly work and research angle of early childhood.

November 2012:

Teacher-led professional development is held in new staff room. Jennifer presents about building individual relationships with children and families and honoring children's different learning styles. Dara opens the discussion (though hard) about conflict among teachers, spurred on by our work with Diana Ganger about "fierce conversations." Dara meets with Temple Beth Am about shared goals, and how we can support one another in ways that are symbiotically beneficial. School tours for prospective families are now accompanied by one or two teachers.

December 2012:

Community-building activities for faculty are in full swing: Teachers meet about portfolio work and planning times. Teachers host a Hanukkah potluck. A teacher board is put up in the lounge. A faculty party takes place at the Wedgwood Alehouse. One small group sets the stage for collaborative documentation, working together to document a shared moment and inviting feedback through post-it notes, inspiring others at the school. After reflecting on teacher feedback

about new planning schedule, Dara re-adjusts the schedule to provide more co-teacher planning time together, aligning with our value of collaboration. Dara and Emily continue to have conversations with teachers to clarify who we are, and what our values are as a school. One point that is emphasized is that the expectation for children to apologize to one another is not developmentally appropriate, but that supporting and empathizing with both parties is appropriate.

January 2013:

The new director is announced: Jenn Magalnick will begin February 20th. Parent-teacher conferences are now based on meaningful portfolio work as a tool for dialogue. Dara hosts a celebration for new teachers and continues the dialogue of a more in-depth study of our school. Dara opens a blog space for teachers to share ideas with one another. The JCC plans to send Dara to attend the JCCA Professionals Conference in March.

February 2013:

Jenn Magalnick begins, and we utilize Diana Ganger as a resource as we work to form a new leadership team. We begin by reading *Bambini* as a team, to develop a shared language of who we are. One infant class prepares to pilot home visits in place of parent-teacher conferences.

March 2013:

Dara attends the JCCA Professionals Conference in Orlando, bringing back inspiration for inter-departmental collaboration within the JCC, and looking forward to grow as a community. At this conference, she presents about the value of reflective supervision, and what it looks like within the context of our school. Small-group conversations focus on documentation as a meaningful tool, thinking with teachers about the various values and intentions for documentation. Through ongoing advocacy, we are finally able to offer the position of a part-time education coordinator and will promote someone to this administrative position internally to continue growing leadership from within.

April 2013:

For our annual Art Show, we shifted the focus from a product or display to a more authentic focus on documentation of children's work, inviting families and colleagues to be part of the dialogue of the work in their class, and other classrooms throughout the school.