

RS

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL
OPTIONS FOR YEAR 4 (1974-5)

I	Phy	Ger	Art	DS
II	Che	Fre	Com	
III	Bio	Lat	DS	EW
IV	Bio (O)	His	Typ	GED
V	Fre (O)	Geog	Pot	

Suggestion of Jewish Studies Committee: That the normal allocation in Year 4 of 5 periods per week per secular subject be reduced to 4 in respect of 2 groups of subjects in order to accommodate 2 further JS/MH periods within the 9.30 - 4.00 timetable.

Comments of subject teachers:

Science Department

1. Difficulty in finishing the syllabus in any depth.
2. Would leave little time, if any, for revision.
3. The increasing size of classes has tended to slow things down anyway and 4 periods would exaggerate this (with the practical work involved).
4. The "need for speed" would mean abandoning the present 'O'/CSE "term of trial" period. The two groups would need to be split quite soon (possibly at the start).
The points mentioned above apply to Physics → Chem → Bio in decreasing order of acuteness.
5. 4 periods would be sufficient for Biology with a selected "A" stream group but even with such a group there may be problems with the physics and chemistry.

French Department

I would be reluctant to see a reduction in the number of periods of French, particularly in view of the fact that the department gave up a period in the second year to facilitate last year's timetable.

History Department

I would find it undesirable to reduce fourth and fifth form teaching by one period each. As it is we have the minimum period allocation of two periods a week in 1st, 2nd and 3rd years. Also the syllabus content is very heavy in both O-level history alternatives.

English Department

I do not think that external examination performance would be adversely affected by the reduction to four periods in the fourth year. However, the fourth-year course is not examination orientated; we are not under pressure from an examination syllabus. There is freedom to pursue interests, to discuss, to read widely and variously. The curtailment of this freedom before the examination-centred fifth year would, I think, be unfortunate, particularly in the lower streams.

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Commerce Department

As far as both typewriting and commerce are concerned I could manage with four periods without results deteriorating.

Mathematics Department

I consider that the traditional five periods of teaching are required if the syllabus is to be fully dealt with. This is especially true in the case of the 'B' forms for the 4th and 5th years. (Great difficulty has been experienced in the past by these two forms, due to the number of lessons lost through outings for Geography and Geology etc.) Another point to be borne in mind is that the periods are only 35 minutes long and that the first-year maths classes have already had their quota cut to 4 lessons per week.

Latin Department

Mr. Savitz and I agree that it would be unwise at this late stage to reduce the number of Latin periods in the fourth year, principally for the following reasons:-

- a) It is a new course and therefore as far as we are concerned, still in the experimental stage.
- b) The nature of the course is much broader and much more ground has to be covered than in the former traditional course, during lesson time.

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL,
LIVERPOOL

A Further Memorandum on

JEWISH SUBJECTS IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS.

by Rabbi Dr.C.Simons, Director of Jewish Studies

August, 1974/Menachem Ab 5734

Earlier this year, I prepared memoranda pointing out the absurd situation that in the 40 period timetable of the 4th and 5th years, only 3 periods are devoted to Jewish subjects. These 3 periods must accommodate Modern Hebrew (including O-level), Scripture Knowledge (O-level/CSE) and General Jewish Studies! As a consequence, Jewish pupils in these years must come to school earlier and have additional periods in Jewish subjects outside the official school day.

As a result of these memoranda, a joint meeting of Governors, Religious Advisory Committee and Heads of J.S. and M.H. was held on 9th May 1974 to discuss this situation and try to find a solution. At this meeting, various compromise suggestions were put forward including the integration of two of the assembly periods in both the 4th and 5th years into the main timetable, in place of secular periods. Finally, the following compromise suggestion was accepted. Three "assembly" periods in both the 4th and 5th years would be integrated into the main timetable and to compensate for this, there would be a secular lesson, three days a week, for the 4th and 5th years during the "assembly" periods. This would apply to the 4th year from September, 1974 and to both the 4th and 5th years from September, 1975.

About mid-June, the Headmaster discussed this arrangement with various members of the secular staff but they felt that this was a decision which the Staff Association must take. On 24th June, 1974 the Staff Association held an extraordinary meeting in which this matter was discussed. To quote from the minutes of this meeting - "The general feeling of the meeting was still that a uniform start to the school day was the ideal to be pursued and that any further movement away from this ideal was unacceptable. It was the experience of all staff on early-morning duty that the staggered start was unsatisfactory and that teaching conditions between 8.55 and 9.30 were very difficult. It was pointed out that teachers of secular subjects were implying unwillingness to work in the conditions under which teachers of Jewish Studies now worked - and this was reaffirmed". In the end, this proposal was completely rejected by the secular staff.

One might mention here that the views of the secular staff on the completely unsatisfactory nature of "assembly" periods (and hence their unwillingness to teach their subjects during them), have been made for years by myself, my predecessor and the Jewish subjects staff.

To continue from the minutes of the Staff Association. "The general principle was then reiterated that the Governors should decide the priorities of a Jewish School. Religious Studies should be established within the curriculum of a forty period week and the secular curriculum built around the requirements of Jewish Studies. This principle, put to a vote was passed unanimously".

On the following day (25th June) there was a meeting of the newly formed Jewish Studies Sub-Committee (a Foundation Sub-Committee whose membership includes about half the Governors and Managers, albeit some of them in a different capacity).

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The Staff Association's rejection of the above proposal was discussed. Finally, it was unanimously recommended that two of the assembly periods in both the 4th and 5th years be integrated into the main timetable, the periods to come from different option lines in the 4th and 5th years. It therefore came as a great shock when at the meeting of the Governors held during the following week, this recommendation, which was already a compromise was not accepted. Apparently the reason for the rejection was based mainly on a memorandum collating comments of subject teachers. Since neither Mrs. Capek nor myself saw this memorandum before the Governors' meeting, it was not possible to give our comments on it. I shall therefore now give my observations on it.

- (1) The comments of eight departments are absent.
- (2) Some heads of departments were of the impression that they would lose a period in both the 4th and 5th years. (e.g. head of history department "I would find it undesirable to reduce 4th and 5th form teaching by one period each"). In fact they would lose a period in only one of these years. If a situation is misunderstood, comments on it cannot be reliable.
- (3) One cannot expect the head of an academic department to write that he would be "happy to lose" or even "prepared to lose" a period per week. Such a statement would make it appear that a professional man is not being conscientious about his work. It is significant to note that no one stated that they "object" to losing a period. In fact at the Staff Association meeting, the staff unanimously passed that the secular curriculum be built around the requirements of Jewish Studies in a forty period week, which means the cutting down of some secular periods.
- (4) The science department has the least reluctance with Biology, which occurs on two lines of options, thus easing the problem.
- (5) Latin did not lose any period when the lower school Jewish subjects were integrated into the timetable. I understand we have more periods throughout the school devoted to Latin than in other schools. We also have to ask ourselves whether we can let Latin have more periods than in other schools in order to do experimental courses when those periods are desperately required for Jewish Subjects.
- (6) Concern on the reduction of periods in secular subjects has been expressed in connection with the "B" forms. In this connection one should remember that there are also "B" forms in Modern Hebrew and Scripture Knowledge and it is almost impossible to arrange examination programmes for these classes under the present conditions. I have recently been wrestling with the timetable to try and accommodate these pupils in the best way possible under the circumstances but the results are far from satisfactory. Why should Jewish subjects have to be "Cinderella" in a Jewish school?
- (7) These proposals do not cut down the number of academic periods in the timetable. We are bringing some of the Modern Hebrew/Scripture Knowledge periods into the timetable and this should improve the O-level/CSE results in these subjects.
- (8) Even with these proposals there would still be more periods per secular subject than for Modern Hebrew and Scripture Knowledge.

Conclusion

From reports and personal observation, I have been able to compare the amount of time devoted to Jewish subjects in the timetables of the 4th and 5th years of a variety of Jewish schools throughout

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the world. In no case have I found a school which devotes so little time as our own. We cannot expect our pupils to give a greater respect and produce good O-level and CSE results in Jewish subjects if we continue to put them, in the main, outside the official school hours. Hence the integration of the assembly periods into the official school hours is a vital necessity and should be put into operation at the earliest possible moment.

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL, LIVERPOOL
NEW PROPOSAL FOR FOURTH AND FIFTH YEAR ASSEMBLY
PERIODS

by Rabbi Dr. C. Simons, Director of Jewish Studies

January 1975/Shevat 5725

This proposal will integrate half of the assembly periods into the timetable without the loss of any secular periods and also without any secular teacher having to teach before the official start of school.

The Proposal

- (a) For the fourth year 3 JS/MH assembly periods will be integrated into the timetable and will have a 43 period week; for the fifth year 2 JS/MH assembly periods will be integrated into the timetable and will have a 42 period week.
- (b) For 3 and 2 days a week, the 4th and 5th year timetables respectively will be as follows:-
 - 9.30 a.m. - 12.05 p.m: periods 1-4 (as at present)
 - 12.05 p.m. - 12.40 p.m; new period
 - 1.30 p.m. - 4.00 p.m: periods 5 - 8 (as at present)

N.B. The days on which the 4th year has the new period will be different from when the 5th year will have them.

- (c) The staff who are teaching during this new period will not teach during period 5 and will have lunch break from 12.40 p.m. to 2.05 p.m.

JEWISH SUBJECTS IN 4th & 5th YEARS

by Rabbi Dr. C. Simons. May 75/Sivan 5735

"A" = Assembly

INEQUALITY OF ASSEMBLY PERIODS & TIMETABLE PERIODS

- 1) Making Jewish pupils of 15-16 years old come to school $\frac{1}{2}$ hour each day, before the 40% non-Jewish pupils in their class causes great resentment. (This was a reason for changing system in about 1964. From 1964-1971 Assembly period was within school day & all pupils arrived in school at same time. From 1972 non-uniform start of school day and consequent return of resentment.)
- 2) No registration before "A" period - therefore continual lateness and absenteeism.
- 3) Observations of secular staff on "A" periods.
"It was experience of all staff on early-morning duty that the staggered start was unsatisfactory

and that teaching conditions between 8.55 and 9.30 were very difficult. It was pointed out that teachers of secular subjects were implying unwillingness to work in the conditions in which teachers of Jewish Studies now worked - and this was reaffirmed."

Minutes of Staff Association 24th June 1974.

- 4) If a J.S. teacher is away, there is no possibility of a substitution and lesson is completely lost (unlike a timetable period). Period "A" does not even appear on the "Replacement Sheet"
- 5) Majority of 4th and 5th year periods have to take place simultaneously during "A" periods and this causes limitations on the arrangement of staffing for these classes. In no secular subject do 4th and 5th years meet simultaneously.
- 6) Not possible to staff all pupils of 4th and 5th years for every "A" period.

- 7) Reduces prestige of Jewish subjects having them out of school hours. This is the raison d'être of our school.

The above reasons clearly show that "A" periods are vastly INFERIOR to timetable periods

ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATION OF ASSEMBLY PERIODS

The integration of "A" periods into timetable is not just a movement of periods from before school into timetable but has other positive advantages as well. (Even if it were just that there would still be positive advantages since as shown above "A" periods are vastly inferior)

- 1) Even if "A" periods were equivalent to timetable periods, there would still be less periods

than for any other secular subject. These periods must accommodate S.K (O & CSE), M.H (O) and general Jewish Studies. With the acceptance of my new O & CSE syllabuses this time problem has become more acute (since exam. is no longer just a knowledge of the Scriptures but an understanding of the principles and laws contained in the Bible). The movement of "A" periods into timetable would enable us to supplement these lessons by additional ones in the "A" periods.

2) Senior Jewish Assembly. Just before I came to school, the S.J.A. was suspended because at that time the attitude of the pupils was not positive.

This has now completely changed and there is an extremely positive approach to services by the present 3rd year. It is therefore very important to reinstate this service for next year's 4th year - otherwise there will be pupils who will stop Tephillin and davening.

(I made the same point a year ago about last year's 3rd form who were also very keen on

services - since there was no integration of "A" periods, these pupils no longer have a service and a number have stopped Tephillin and davening.

The practice of Yiddishkeit is an important function of a Jewish school

- 3) Junior Jewish Assembly On Tuesday & Thursday mornings (8.45-9.30) there is a JJA involving over 160 pupils of varying standards and abilities. Due to staff pressure at this time (i.e. they are teaching 4th and 5th year classes), all these pupils must be accommodated in one assembly with only one or at most two teachers. The idea of these assemblies is that pupils can practice Davening, learn ^{about} the order of the service, and that boys can have opportunity to conduct services. Under present arrangements, the pupils cannot possibly obtain maximum benefit. However if 4th and 5th year classes were integrated we would have more staff available and could considerably improve on the JJA. (e.g. a simpler service for the less able children).

- 4) The integration of the "A" periods would make staff available to teach additional voluntary groups ^{at this time} lower down schools. Pupils are often asking for such groups but the staff are occupied with 4th & 5th year classes at this time and hence cannot comply with these requests. Such groups could include the following.

- a) Seminary Stream for girls (to provide facilities for girls parallel to those provided for boys by the Yeshiva. The J.S. sub-committee is quite rightly very keen to introduce this stream. However due to severe staffing problems, we have found this to be impossible after school. The integration of "A" periods would make staffing available for it at 8.45 each morning.
- b) Service practice. A no. of boys are keen to learn how to conduct services. With staff available this would be a good time to do this.
- c) Shuir on Parashat Masei.

WILL EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS DROP?

The effect of this integration which is already an agreed compromise would be that some subjects would have 9 periods instead of 10 over a period of two years.

- 1) Netterley School has 4 periods per option (except Maths and English) i.e. 8 periods over two years
- 2) S.K. (O/CSE) & M.H. (O) results should improve with this arrangement. Up to now, due to lack of periods, it has only been possible to enter minority of pupils for these exams. (e.g. 1974. SK (O & CSE) 25 pupils out of nearly 60)
- 3) This is not a unique problem - there are other Jewish schools in this country and abroad all of which have more JS periods in 4th and 5th years.
Comments by the educationalists clearly show that academic standards do not fall even when 50% of the time is devoted to Jewish subjects.

How much more so when all we are discussing is
the devoting of 12.5% of the time to Jewish subjects

(see for example Report by Dr. Kammetzky and Rabbi
Teitelbaum on Educational Mission to England p 7
re equal time given to secular and Jewish studies.

".... you will be able to prove that your
program of secular studies will not suffer from
such a program - as indeed it does not in
the United States ..."

Senator Ribicoff, Secretary of Health, Education and
Welfare, stated that pupils who have such a program
are more than equal with their fellow students who
do not. They go to college, win scholarships, receive
awards and honours in overwhelming numbers. (Leaflet
from Torah Umesorah - Basic Questions People Ask about
the Hebrew Day School).

SUMMARY

- 1) ASSEMBLY PERIODS ARE VASTLY INFERIOR TO TIMETABLE PERIODS.
- 2) INTEGRATION INTO TIMETABLE OF ASSEMBLY PERIODS WOULD ALSO GIVE ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES FOR 4th and 5th YEARS AND ALSO TO 1st, 2nd & 3rd YEARS
- 3) OUTSIDE EVIDENCE QUITE CLEARLY SHOWS THAT ACADEMIC STANDARDS WOULD NOT FALL WITH SUCH AN INTEGRATION.

CONCLUSION

The integration of two Assembly periods in both the 4th and 5th years is a compromise which was agreed unanimously by the Jewish Studies sub-committee last year.

At the Staff Association meeting a few weeks ago, a letter from the Chairman of Governors was read out which stated that the Governors were committed to this introduction this September.

".... Jewish Religious Instruction was the raison d'être for our School..." (Report by Headmaster 21.10.71)
How can we therefore justify continuing a system in which all the Jewish subjects together (S.K, M.H. and general J.S) have LESS time in the timetable than any singular secular subject?