



The Initiative for Applied Education Research  
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

# **Parent-Teacher Relations in a Changing Environment: Models of Effective Relations and Ways to Create Them**

Report from the seminar and workshop

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The Initiative for Applied Education Research  
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

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Parent-Teacher Relations in a Changing Environment

**The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities** was founded in 1959. Its membership currently comprises close to 100 top Israeli scientists and scholars. The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law, 1961, declares that its principal objectives and tasks are to foster and promote scientific activity; to advise the government on research activities and scientific planning of national importance; to maintain ties with foreign academies of science; to represent Israeli science at international institutes and conferences; and, to publish articles that can further science.

**The Initiative for Applied Education Research (the Initiative)** places up-to-date, scientific, critically-appraised knowledge and information at the disposal of decision-makers in the field of education. This kind of information is crucial for the intelligent formulation of policy and for optimal planning of interventions to improve educational achievements in Israel.

**The Initiative's vision:** Research knowledge is an essential component for planning public policy or comprehensive interventions. In the planning phase, critically-appraised research knowledge supports the formulation of policy whose chance of success is greater, and at a later point, enables rational public discourse to take place. The Initiative implements this vision in the field of education.

**The Initiative's method of operation:** The issues the Initiative addresses are those raised by decision-makers and it consults with senior Ministry of Education officials and other stakeholders. The Initiative's steering committee, appointed by the president of the Israel Academy, is responsible for the Initiative's work program and the peer-review processes of documents it creates.

The Initiative operates by means of expert committees and by convening joint symposia for researchers, professionals in the field and decision-makers. It publishes a variety of reports and makes them available to the public. Members of expert committees carry out their work on a voluntary basis.

**History of the Initiative:** The Initiative was established in late 2003 as a joint venture of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Ministry of Education, and the Rothschild Foundation (Yad Hanadiv). Since the beginning of 2010, the Initiative has been operating as a unit of the Israel Academy. In the summer of 2010, the Israeli Knesset amended the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law, regulating the Israel Academy's advisory role vis-à-vis government ministries seeking its consulting services. The Initiative directs the consulting activities on education-related issues, which the Israel Academy provides to the government and various authorities.

## **Background**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has ushered in many changes. One of the main characteristics of these changes is the blurring of boundaries between social frameworks (home and work, family and school, virtual and actual friendships) and between roles (parent and teacher, child and adult). The pace of change in the information age has accelerated, and the technological changes have spawned social changes and created new needs, different expectations and unconventional challenges. Concepts such as availability, immediacy and up-to-dateness have become central in the society, creating educational dilemmas for the society in general and for educators in particular. The technologies that have become accessible to a wide audience have generated changes in the structure of the labor market, in family life and in social and civic functions.

The connection between emotional and cognitive dimensions, like the social and technological changes that have occurred in recent years, underlines the need for a new look at the relations between school and family, and the role each one plays in the child's development process. A committee of experts conducted significant work on relations between the family and the educational framework in early childhood (kindergarten through grade 3), and the impact of these relations on the child's development and success in the school system. This committee, chaired by Prof. Charles Greenbaum, submitted its recommendations in late 2011. Pursuant to these recommendations, the Ministry of Education requested further study on two areas that were not central to the work of the previous committee: 1) the social and technology changes that we are currently experiencing, and 2) the unique characteristics of adolescence, and the way these characteristics influence effective relations between parents and teachers, and the ways to create such relations.

The committee of experts chaired by Prof. (Emerita) Zipora Schechtman of the University of Haifa was formed in response to the Ministry of Education's request. The committee was asked to address the question: What can be learned from the research and from the field about teacher-parent relations that contribute to the development of contemporary adolescents?

Members of the School-Family Committee – Parent-Teacher Relations in a Changing Environment

**Prof. Zipora Schechtman**, University of Haifa, Chair

**Prof. Audrey Addi-Raccah**, Tel Aviv University

**Prof. Ismael Abu-Saad**, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

**Prof. Gustavo Mesch**, University of Haifa

**Attorney Yael Kafri**

**Attorney Yiska Leibowitz**

**Prof. Amiram Raviv**, Or Yehuda Center for Academic Studies

**Dr. Anat Gofen-Sarig**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Prof. Yaacov Yablon**, Bar-Ilan University

**Oded Busharian**, Committee Coordinator

**Miriam Rest**, Assistant to the Committee Coordinator

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### **The seminar**

In the framework of its mission, the committee underwent an ongoing process of learning in which it mobilized knowledge from the scientific literature and met with people from the field in order to understand the unique dilemmas and challenges the Israeli education system faces. As part of this process, the committee held a one-day seminar on models and possibilities for creating effective relations between parents and teachers. The committee aspired to promote several objectives by conducting this seminar. First, the seminar was part of its own learning process aimed at formulating recommendations and deciding on the structure of the document it planned to write. Secondly, the seminar was designed to present the committee's work to relevant audiences, expose them to the knowledge that appears to be important and helpful, and to create opportunities for learning from them in the future by involving them in the process. Finally, the committee sought to focus the attention of policy makers and people in the field on this topic, and to strengthen recognition of the importance of the connection between teachers and parents.

A framework for addressing effective relations between teachers and parents was presented at the seminar. In this framework, adolescent pupils are a party that is no less important than the parents and the teachers. In addition, models and principles were presented (from various angles and aspects) for creating connections between the home and the school. The seminar also reserved a special place during the course of the day for the possibilities and challenges of incorporating new media technology in the relations between the school and the home.

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## Introduction

The committee convened the seminar on School-Family Relations about six months after beginning its work. During these months, the committee members studied the topic from the academic perspective and learned from educators who conduct effective relations between school and family. This learning took place in the meetings held by the committee (or subcommittees) with these educators. In its first meeting, the committee met with Prof. Charles Greenbaum, who reviewed the work of a previous Initiative committee (which he chaired) that focused on family-education system relations in early childhood. During this initial session, the committee also met with Ms. Betty Rytwo, who is responsible for relations with parents at the Ministry of Education. She presented the ministry's activity in the wake of the Greenbaum Committee's summary document. Over the following meetings, the committee met with educators and representatives of organizations engaged in promoting relations between parents and the school system, including attorney Gidon Fisher, chairman of the national parents' organization, who presented the organization's role and activity; Mr. Sharon Greenberg, head of the Internet Technologies Unit in the ORT network; Dr. Eli Eisenberg, head of ORT's Administration for R&D and Training; and Ms. Hagit Navarro, director of the ORT network's Learning Skills Center. The committee also met with Ms. Shiri Eshed, director of the Amal network's Technological Education Centers and teaching for the special needs population. In addition to these meetings, the committee invited the community of educators to submit position papers describing programs in which parental involvement in school education is a central component. The committee's call for position papers was disseminated via the Internet and print media, and seven such papers were received.<sup>2</sup>

The seminar was planned in collaboration with various entities at the Ministry of Education with the aim of gaining a more in-depth understanding of the topic, learning from academic sources and from experts in Israel and overseas. The members of the committee started with the assumption that school-family relations are vital for the development of adolescents. However, many questions arose pertaining to the quality of the connection and effective ways to create and maintain them, particularly in the case of adolescents. It should be noted that the current committee is continuing the work of the previous committee (chaired by Professor Greenbaum) that operated under the auspices of the Initiative and focused on relations between families and the education system in early childhood. While these relations are quite obvious and essential in early childhood, the connection between the family and the educational framework is liable to be complicated in light of the adolescents' special needs, and because of a broad range of topics pertaining to the era in which we live. Indeed, upon establishing the committee, its members defined

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<sup>2</sup> A summary from the committee's meetings with educators working in the field and from the position papers can be found in the seminar pamphlet, on the website of the Initiative for Applied Education Research (in Hebrew):

<http://education.academy.ac.il/hebrew/eventDetails.aspx?eventId=73andFromHomePage=False>

a number of fields of work related to the topic and to adolescence: online communication, pupils with special needs, groups with a unique culture or low socio-economic status, legal regulation of family-education system relations, and collective efforts by parents to influence the education system. The committee divided into subcommittees to address these topics and the seminar was built upon the work of these subcommittees.

The seminar began with greetings from a representative of the Ministry of Education's Psychological Counseling Service, Ms. Shosh Zimmerman, and from the committee chair, Prof. Zipora Schechtman. It included three sessions and concluded with a general discussion led by Prof. Amiram Raviv and with audience participation.

The first session of the seminar focused on the importance of involving parents in education and in fostering their children's learning, and on the various ways that parents can do this. Prof. Moshe Israelashvili opened the session and served as a bridge between the current committee and its predecessor (which focused on family-education framework relations in early childhood.) Prof. Israelashvili spoke about the different types of relations required for meeting the unique developmental needs of each particular age group. This also established the basis for discussing the unique needs of adolescents in the context of school-family relations, a discussion that was the central theme of the seminar. Next, Prof. Nancy Hill from Harvard University, the keynote speaker at the seminar, lectured on the character of the connection between the school and the family from a research perspective, based mainly on a comprehensive meta-analysis of the literature and on her own research. The key conclusion from the research was that the most important contribution of parents to their adolescent children is to set goals for them and encourage them to achieve these goals.

Prof. Hill's lecture also emphasized the importance of adapting parental involvement to the stage of the pupil's development, and of adapting the school-parent relations to the parents' abilities and resources. Dr. Iris Manor-Binyamini concluded the session with a presentation of a complex model of relations between the school and the family, focusing on the interpersonal skills required for maintaining an optimal connection with the family.

The second part of the seminar examined the relations between the school and the family from a systemic perspective, based on the experience of people who have worked in this field for many years. Dr. Bilha Noy opened the session by describing the historical development of the Israel education system's attitude toward families. In her view, over the years there were various "coalitions" of the components of the relationship – the parents, the teachers and the pupils. In these coalitions, there was always one party that "remained outside." Dr. Noy recommended forging three-directional collaboration in order to achieve a genuine and optimal connection between the school and the family. Prof. Paul Tractenberg from the Rutgers School of Law in Newark shared with us his insights from many years of research and legal activity on the rights and obligations of

parents in the school system, education policy and the interface between parents and the education system in the legal sphere. Later in the session, Ms. Vered Altshuler-Ezrahi led a discussion featuring a teacher who spoke about her experiences in the complex encounter with parents and a parent who shared her experiences in interfacing with the school system. In the last part of the session, Ms. Betty Rytwo described the Ministry of Education's viewpoint and its activities in this area in recent years.

The third session focused on online communication, a topic described as particularly central and relevant to adolescence. Dr. Meyran Boniel-Nissim presented the latest research on the way in which teachers and parents communicate today and the challenges this form of communication poses for educators. Next, Dr. Gila Kurtz presented the central findings from focus groups she organized on behalf of the committee on the topic of how parents and teachers use the new means of communication. The session concluded with a panel discussion led by Prof. Amiram Raviv, with the participation of Prof. Ismael Abu-Saad, Prof. Gustavo Mesch, attorney Yael Kafri, Ms. Betty Rytwo, Prof. Paul Tractenberg and Prof. Nancy Hill. The members of the committee commented on the lectures they heard during the day and presented – each from the perspective of his or her field of knowledge – various aspects of family-school relations. The members of the panel then fielded questions from the audience.

The day after the seminar, a workshop was held in a smaller framework, with the participation of the committee members, representatives of the Ministry of Education, and Prof. Hill. A member of the committee, Prof. Yaacov Yablon, led the discussion, which began with the question: What is the correct connection between family and school? The discussion then turned to focus on concepts such as involvement, intervention, and the partnership of parents. Prof. Hill summarized the discussion, speaking about the implications and repercussions of various levels of parental involvement in the decision-making process in the schools.

## Insights from the meetings

Prof. Nancy Hill

After the workshop, Prof. Hill sent a letter to the participants that included thoughts, recommendations and feedback from the workshop discussions and seminar meetings. We are attaching the key points of this letter as a summary of this report. It is important to note that the views and recommendations presented in this part are those of Prof. Hill and do not reflect the recommendations of the committee.

**The goal of the interactions between the family and the school:** to involve parents in the school in an effective and meaningful way, enabling them to foster the academic development of their children via the school.

**What can only the parents do?** Parents know their child better than anyone else. They have the advantage of knowing the history of the child and they will continue to be involved in the child's life in the future. Schools need to learn to take advantage of the parents' long-term commitment and familiarity vis-à-vis their child, the pupil.

**What is 'given,' what do we know from previous research and efforts?**

What do parents, teachers and teenagers want from the interaction between the school and the family?

Parents want the school staff and the teachers to hear them. They want them to get to know and appreciate their children. Parents would like to know how the school is supporting their child, especially during the child's adolescent years. Parents want to know who is responsible within the system, and want to be involved in the lives of their adolescent children.

Teachers want parents to check that the pupils do their homework, behave well and come to school ready to learn. Teachers want a connection with the parents, but have difficulty finding time for this. Many teachers are interested in conducting the initial meeting with the parents in positive circumstances, but this is often not the case. Teachers want parents to respect them as professionals and to obey the rules (whether written or unwritten) regarding the boundaries between the home and the school. Teachers want the parents to allow them to teach and to remember that there are other children in the classroom.

Teenagers understand that parents and teachers need to be in contact with each other, and that a good connection between parents and teachers is good for the pupil in particular. Teenagers want their parents to take an interest in their areas of interest. They want to consult with their parents about their future. Teenagers do not want their parents to be involved in their lives as they were during elementary school, when their involvement

included visits during the school day and help with homework. Teenagers want the parents' involvement to be such that recognizes their development as teenagers and helps them to plan their future.

### **Strategies for interactions that work well during adolescence**

- Link between education and success in the future – pertains to grades and work with ethnic groups.
- Building independence around homework – helps to develop a commitment to the school and encourages active involvement.
- Communication between the home and the school: The framework Prof. Hill presented in her lecture distinguishes between types of contacts with parents – a problem-focused contact, a pro-active contact and a “quality” contact. There is a connection between a problem-focused contact and a pro-active contact; the assumption is that these contacts are used to solve problems for and with teenagers. The quality of the connection with the education system is important during adolescence because the teenagers do not involve the parents in their situation in school and parents need alternative sources of information in order to help their children effectively plan their academic path.

The most effective support schools can give to parents who are interested in promoting their child is to provide them with information and tools. This information and these tools will address the way in which parents can explain to their child the connection between their studies today and their future goals.

### **Recommendations for the education system**

The principal recommendation for educators is to focus on providing information to the teenagers and their parents so that they can make the most of the educational experience in the school.

### **How?**

By creating and defining a new position. The new role will include elements of academic counseling and responsibility for the connection with the school. The person who fills this new position will need to work with both parents and teenagers. In working with each particular family, the contact person will help identify the recommended academic path for the child and will connect the family to communities and frameworks that can advance the child's aspirations. In addition, the person working in this new role will conduct seminars and provide information to parents and teenagers that will facilitate school performance.

For each family, one contact person will be appointed to address the range of aspects of the connection with the school. The child's teachers will provide the contact person with information about the child's progress and conduct in class. The contact person will be able to identify each pupil's strong and weak points, and thus will be able to see whether there is an emotional-social issue that needs to be addressed.

Advantages of the contact person and consultation:

- The contact persons are not teachers and their primary work is with the parents. They are not bound by the school's hours of operation, and therefore will be able to adapt their work to hours that are convenient to parents.
- Collaborative work with the parents and teenagers reinforces the connection within the family. However, in cases in which parents are not interested in participating in the process, the contact person can serve as an advisor and help in planning the child's future path.

Disadvantages:

- Another administrative level is added, as well as a new expense for the school.
- It is still unclear whether it is possible to train the new personnel to serve as a bridge between parents and the education system, as opposed to the natural tendency of educators to see things from the school's perspective.

In summary: Instituting a partnership between the families of pupils and the entire school staff is a daunting effort. However, creating a position of contact person for teenagers and their parents can provide parents with a partner who can help them navigate the school's system. The role of the contact person will be to build mutual trust and create the foundation for partnership with the parents. Furthermore, this type of system will enable the parents to be involved in a way that will be most beneficial for the teenagers.

## Summary and insights

Prof. Zipora Schechtman

The seminar was planned when the committee was in its initial stage of learning. This fact influenced the nature of the seminar; which raised questions and complexities more than it provided answers. And this helped to shape the subsequent work of the committee.

The first point that can be learned from the seminar is the importance of conducting a more in-depth discussion of the involvement of parents. As the seminar progressed, and in the workshop the next day, it became increasingly clear to the members of the committee that there is not enough general discussion about “parental involvement” or “a partnership of parents in education,” and that it cannot be assumed that there is preference for more involvement or more partnership. It became clearer that different types of parental involvement in education and different types of communication between parents and teachers have a different impact on (and sometimes even a negative correlation with) the pupils’ achievements and emotional well-being. Therefore, one of the central missions in this stage is to conduct a serious discussion on the various concepts related to the subject of parental involvement, and to clarify the activities required of parents and teachers in each of these types of involvement.

The second salient point that arose in the seminar – a point that also needs to be addressed – is that “one size does **not** fit all”. That is true in two senses:

The first sense is that the involvement of parents in the education of their children, and the activity they should pursue in order to improve their children’s achievements and well-being, must be appropriate for the stage of the child’s development. Activity such as assistance in doing homework, which may be beneficial for children during early childhood, is not effective and may even be inversely related to the pupils’ achievements in adolescence.

The second sense is that the connection with the parents and the activity we expect the parents to undertake should match the parents’ abilities and resources. Most parents are indeed interested in promoting their child and are willing to invest their resources in this, but not all parents have the same tools and resources. For example, it is difficult to expect a single mother of meager means to participate regularly in volunteer activity and decision making at the school. Involving parents in making decisions at the school is thus more effective for parents in a strong socio-economic position. On the other hand, among parents from minority groups, there is a positive connection between achievements and other strategies, such as creating a clear link between studies at school and success in fulfilling ambitions in the future.

A third point that should be noted is the need to take into consideration the perspectives of

the various parties vis-à-vis the connection. The parents expect the teachers to see their child at his best and to help the child achieve his goals. For the sake of the child, they would like a significant contact person to serve as a channel of communication. In the lower grades, the teacher fills most of this role, but as the child grows older, this significant connection disappears. The teachers, on their part, want their pupils to fulfill their obligations and behave as expected of them; and they expect the parents' support in meeting these objectives. It is important for teachers to establish mutual trust with the parents, and for the parents to rely on them to perform their job faithfully. The pupils want the teachers and parents to help them to achieve their goals in full cooperation, while also respecting and understanding their efforts to achieve independence.

In summary, it seems that the assumption that a good connection between the school and the family is vital for the adolescent's development and future success remains intact. However, there is a great need to clarify the meaning of the expressions "school-family relations" and "parental involvement in the school education." Communication between parents and the school is important – but not via every form of communication and not in every context. The teachers can work to strengthen the connection with their pupils and to help strengthen communication between the child and his parents. The parents can create a home atmosphere that supports learning, and can work with the teachers to promote the pupil. The adolescent pupil is an important link in this connection and a significant part of it – both the parents and teachers must take into consideration the desires and characteristics of the pupil.

Two questions arise on how to proceed from here: What activity can the system expect the parents to adopt in order to support their child's studies and emotional well-being? (The seminar provided a partial response to this question.) And how can the education system create a connection with the parents that will help them to carry out this activity? Therefore, the next stage of the committee's work will focus on collecting material based on reviews of the research literature in order to offer a more learned response to these important questions.

## Appendix A: Short CVs<sup>3</sup>

**Prof. Zipora Schechtman** Professor (Emerita) and until recently head of the Department of Counseling and Human Development in the Faculty of Education at University of Haifa. Prof. Shechtman is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) and the International Society for Research on Aggression. Until 2012 she served as the deputy editor of the APA's professional journal, *Group Dynamics*, and is a member of editorial boards of prominent journals focusing on groups, including: *Psychotherapy – the International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* and *Group Dynamics Research*.

Prof. Shechtman's research focuses on the processes and results of group counseling and treatment of children and adults, group counseling and psychotherapy for children and adults suffering from social, emotional and behavioral difficulties, factors of and treatment methods for aggressiveness and violence in children, and on the bibliotherapeutic process and its results.

Prof. Shechtman holds a PhD degree in education and educational counseling from Washington University (US), received in 1984.

**Prof. Moshe Israelashvili** Associate Professor in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University's Department of Special Education and School Counseling. His main areas of research are stress inoculation and prevention programs, adjustment processes or lack thereof to new social settings, coping and resilience under pressure, and optimal development.

Prof. Israelashvili holds a PhD degree in social psychology from Tel Aviv University, received in 1990.

**Nancy E. Hill**, Professor at the Graduate School of Education and is the Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. Professor Hill's research focuses on ethnicity, culture and context and identifies unique and interactive ways in which these constructs influence parenting beliefs, parenting practices, and children mental health and academic adjustment. Within this area, she has focused on parental involvement in education during adolescence. Dr. Hill is the recent recipient of the William T. Grant Foundation's Distinguished Faculty Fellowship to support her work on "Improving adolescents' academic achievement holistically: Inter-agency collaborations at the state and local levels." Prof. Hill serves as Secretary of the Governing Council for the Society for Research in Child Development, and is a founding member of the Study Group on Race, Culture, and Ethnicity, an interdisciplinary an interdisciplinary group of scientists who develop theory and methodology for defining and understanding the cultural context within diverse families.

Prof. Hill holds a PhD in developmental psychology from Michigan State University, 1994.

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<sup>3</sup> Speakers and session chairpersons are presented in alphabetic order, followed by other members of the committee of experts, also in alphabetical order.

**Iris Manor-Binyamini** is a lecturer in the Department for Special Education in the University of Haifa's Faculty of Education. Her fields of research include special education in the Bedouin community in Israel, coping strategies of parents and siblings of children with various disabilities (developmental, emotional and behavioral) in different communities in Israel (Bedouins, ultra-Orthodox Jews and Druze), and collaboration in cross-professional teams in special schools and cooperation between these teams and the parents of children with disabilities.

She holds a doctoral degree in Social Sciences (specializing in Education) from the University of Liverpool (England), 2002.

**Yael Kafri** Specializes in education law, teaches courses in the field of education law in the Educational Administration, Policy and Leadership MA program at Tel Aviv University. Until the end of 2012, she directed the "Law and Education" area in the "Law in the Service of the Community" program and was a staff member of the Human Rights Clinic run by Tel Aviv University's Law Faculty. She previously worked with the legislative teams in the Rotlevy Committee (The Committee on the Rights of the Child) and in the Dovrat Committee (National Task Force for the Advancement of Education in Israel). In that capacity she was involved in preparing proposed legislation in the areas of educational equality and quality, public education and professional legislation for education employees.

Ms. Kafri holds an MA degree in educational policy received from Tel Aviv University.

**Bilha Noy** is a member of the board of directors of the Israel National Council for the Child, a member of the Committee for the Knesset Speaker's Prize for Quality of Life, and the Committee for Controlled Opening of Registration Regions in the Ministry of Education. Dr. Noy served as director of the Psychological Counseling Service (Shefi) in the Ministry of Education and, previously, established and directed the ministry's Open Line for Pupils. During the three decades prior to her joining the Ministry of Education's staff, Dr. Noy worked as a teacher and educational counselor. She holds a doctorate in Educational Counseling from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982.

**Paul L. Tractenberg**, Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor and Alfred C. Clapp Distinguished Public Service Professor of Law at Rutgers School of Law-Newark. He is the author of numerous books, articles and papers on education law; a frequent lecturer; and a consultant and adviser to many national, regional, and state educational organizations and agencies. Among his many research interests and areas of involvement in education law and policy are educational equity and diversity, student legal rights, educational accountability and state intervention in local school districts, educational governance and school finance. He was the founding director of the Education Law Center, one of the United States' foremost education advocacy organization for parents and students, as well as the Institute on Education Law and Policy at Rutgers University-Newark, New Jersey's and one of the nation's premier center for interdisciplinary research and innovative thinking on education policy.

Prof. Tractenberg holds a J.D. from the University of Michigan, 1963.

**Vered Altshuler-Ezrahi** is a group facilitator and graduate of the Mandel School for Educational Leadership. For over twenty years, Altshuler-Ezrahi worked with parents and teachers in educational and therapeutic systems. She supported and led collaborative systems between teachers and parents – in times of crisis and during routine periods. Relying on her professional experience and in-depth study of various models in Israel and in the world, she developed the Kamah program for developing and administering training and programs on the subject of teacher-parent relations. In the past, she worked as a professional manager and as director of the training unit at the Home for Special Families organization, as an educational counselor at the Hebrew University Secondary School, and at the Bnei Brith children's home.

She received a master's degree with honors in Social Work from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2003.

**Betty Rytwo** is the director of the Parents and Family department at the Ministry of Education's Psychological Counseling Service. She previously worked for over 17 years as a national instructor in the Ministry of Education on preventing the abuse of children and teenagers. Ms. Ritbo has more than 30 years of experience in therapy, counseling and teaching.

She holds master's degrees in Special Education (1982) and Educational Counseling (1993), both from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Prof. Gustavo Mesch** Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty at the University of Haifa; professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Professor Mesch is a senior research associate at the University of Haifa's Social Research Center and edits the section on communication and media in the International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences. He researches the areas of Internet and society, adolescents, urbanization, crime and deviation.

Professor Mesch holds a PhD degree in sociology from Ohio University (U.S.), received in 1993.

**Meyran Boniel-Nissim** is a lecturer and researcher in the field of psychology of the Internet in the University of Haifa's Faculty of Education. Dr. Boniel-Nissim is a member of an international research team on the health and well-being of teenagers. In Israel, the World Health Organization's survey "Health Behavior on School-Aged Children (WHO-HBSC)" is being conducted at Bar-Ilan University as part of this program. Dr. Boniel-Nissim is also a partner in leading an international group of researchers on the topic of technology-mediated communication. Her fields of research include the Internet as a tool for counseling, the culture of teenagers on the Internet, and communities of risk on the Internet. Dr. Boniel-Nissim also teaches courses on the psychology of the Internet to educators and therapists, advises parents and leads workshops for adolescents.

She received her doctorate from the Department of Counseling and Human Development of the University of Haifa's Faculty of Education in 2010.

**Gila Kurtz** is the head of the graduate program in Computerization and Learning at the Or Yehuda College for Academic Studies' School of Education. Dr. Kurtz is an associate professor at the University of Maryland in the graduate program in Distance Learning. In the past, she directed the Center for Computerized Learning at Bar-Ilan University and headed the OFEK satellite communications unit of the Open University. In 2012, she published her first book: Getting On Line for Learning: A Digital Toolbox for the Teacher, which she wrote together with Prof. David Chen.

She received a doctorate in Political Science from Bar-Ilan University.

**Prof. Amiram Raviv**, Educational and clinical psychologist; dean of the School of Psychology; head of the Educational Counseling program at the Or Yehuda Center for Academic Studies. He is Professor Emeritus at the School of Psychological Sciences at Tel Aviv University, and was formerly the head of the Psychology program and head of the Clinical Child Psychology specialty. He also served as the chief psychologist of the Ministry of Education's Psychological Counseling Service. The areas he researches include topics such as children's coping methods under stressful conditions, different aspects of school and educational psychology, psychological counseling in traditional

(written) and electronic media, adolescent and parental behavior in seeking out psychological help, and children's cognitive development. In recent years, Professor Raviv has been involved with several research teams working on psychological aspects of coping with intractable conflict. In addition, he has practiced individual treatment and counseling for many years, writes training materials for parents and grandparents, consults in the writing of children's books geared toward fostering cognitive development, and puts together parent-training programs for radio and television.

Professor Raviv holds a PhD degree in psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 1974.

**Ismael Abu-Saad**, professor in the Education Department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, founding director of the Center for Bedouin Studies and Development, and holds the Abraham Cutler Chair in Education at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Prof. Abu-Saad serves on the executive committee of the Adva Center, is a member of the international council of the New Israel Fund and the award committee for creative work in the Arabic language. He was formerly a member of the national task force for promoting education in Israel (the Dovrat Committee) and a member of the academic committee for the national research project for struggling pupils in Israel, an initiative sponsored by the Chief Scientist's Office in the Ministry of Education. His research focuses on inequality in education, social changes and education in indigenous societies, administration and culture in multicultural societies and Arab education in Israel. Prof. Abu-Saad serves as a member of the editorial board and guest editor of various journals, including *Hagar: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities*; *Palestinian Review of Society and History*; *Holy Land Studies: Interdisciplinary Journal*; and *American Behavioral Scientists*. He received a PhD in Educational Administration and Policy from the University of Minnesota in 1989.

Prof. Abu-Saad is a member of the Initiative's committee of experts on School-Family Relations in a Changing Era.

**Audrey Addi-Raccah**, a senior lecturer at the Policy and Administration in Education Department at Tel Aviv University and serves as head of the department. Her fields of research include social inequality and the sociology of teaching and educational administration. In her research, Prof. Addi-Raccah focuses on issues of inequality in the education system, the feminization of administration, the work of principals and, most recently, the relationship between the school and the environment and community.

She received a PhD in Sociology from Tel Aviv University, 1997.

Prof. Addi-Raccah is a member of the Initiative's committee of experts on School-Family Relations in a Changing Era.

**Anat Gofen-Sarig**, a lecturer at the School of Public Policy and Government at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Gofen-Sarig serves as chairperson of the school's Publications Committee and Scholarship Committee; she is also a member of the academic committee of Hebrew University's Research Institute for Innovation in Education. Her research investigates "exceptions" and the connection between them and public policy, focusing on social breakthroughs, inter-generational mobility, the lack of response to policies, and organizations responsible for implementing policy.

She received a PhD in Public Policy from Hebrew University, 2007.

Prof. Gofen-Sarig is a member of the Initiative's committee of experts on School-Family Relations in a Changing Era.

**Yaacov B. Yablon**, a senior lecturer at the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University and head of the program in educational counseling. He did his post-doctoral specialization as a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard University. Prof. Yablon studies the emotional aspects of behavior and learning, and his research focuses on dangerous behaviors of pupils in schools, in prevention programs and in peace education.

He received a PhD in Education from Bar-Ilan University, 2003.

Prof. Yablon is a member of the Initiative's committee of experts on School-Family Relations in a Changing Era and coordinated the "From Research to Action in Early Childhood Education" committee.

**Attorney Yiska Leibowitz**, adjunct instructor at Hebrew University's Faculty of Law and a mediator at the Gevim Institute. Attorney Leibowitz served for 24 years (1995-2009) as state attorney in the Southern District. Previously, she worked as in the State Prosecutor's Office for the Jerusalem District, was the legal advisor of the State of Israel's Economic Mission in New York, and directed the criminal department in the State Prosecutor's Office.

She received a law degree from Hebrew University, 1971.

Attorney Leibowitz is a member of the Initiative's committee of experts on School-Family Relations in a Changing Era.

**Oded Busharian, Committee Coordinator**, earned a bachelor's degree in the combined Philosophy, Economics and Political Science program at Hebrew University (2007); and a master's degree in Political Science from Hebrew University (2011). He received the dean's scholarship and rector's prize for academic excellence in his graduate studies. He also worked as a research assistant and teaching assistant in the Political Science Department at Hebrew University. In the framework of the Initiative for Applied Education Research, he coordinated the team of experts on treatment interventions for children with behavioral problems or disturbances, and is currently coordinating the committee of experts on school-family relations in a changing world, as well as the steering team for a meeting on inequality and education.

**Miriam Rest, Assistant to the Committee Coordinator**, earned a bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Sociology-Anthropology at Tel Aviv University (2011) and a certificate from the Koteret School of Journalism (2011). She is currently pursuing a master's degree in European Studies at the European Forum of Hebrew University. She previously worked as a research assistant at Delphi Global Analysis, a Washington-based consulting company providing consultation to public and private clients on issues pertaining to the Middle East and energy. In addition, she served as coordinator of content development at the Adult Unit of the Mandel-Israel Foundation; in this framework, she was responsible for the knowledge generated at the unit and for storing this knowledge.

## Appendix B: Seminar agenda<sup>4</sup>

<b>8:30-9:00</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
<b>9:00-10:50</b>	<b>Session 1: Constructive relations between parents and teachers during adolescence, and the importance of such relations</b> <b>Chair: Prof. Zipora Schechtman, University of Haifa, chair of the committee of experts</b>
<b>9:00-9:05</b>	Welcoming remarks – <b>Shoshana Zimmerman</b> , Ministry of Education
<b>9:05-9:10</b>	Opening remarks: <b>Prof. Zipora Schechtman</b> , Haifa University, chair of the committee of experts
<b>9:10- 9:35</b>	Is there hope for improving School-Family relations in adolescence? <b>Prof. Moshe Israelashvili</b> , Tel Aviv University, member of the Parent-Teacher Relations in Early Childhood Committee
<b>9:35-10:25</b>	Family Involvement in Education: Challenges and Opportunities during Adolescence <b>Prof. Nancy E. Hill</b> , Harvard University
<b>10:25-10:50</b>	Cooperation between parents and experts (multi-professional team) in schools for special education <b>Dr. Iris Manor-Binyamini</b> , University of Haifa
<b>10:50-11:15</b>	<b>Break – coffee and cake</b>
<b>11:15-13:35</b>	<b>Session 2: Relations between parents and teachers in Israel</b> <b>Chair: Attorney Yael Kafri, member of the committee of experts</b>
<b>11:15-11:55</b>	Relations of parents with their child’s school: Insights from the past and directions for the future <b>Dr. Bilha Noy</b>
<b>11:55-12:45</b>	Parents, Schools and The Community: What Is The Parental Role in Education, What Are Its Legal Sources and What Affects Its Implementation? <b>Prof. Paul L. Tractenberg</b> , Rutgers University
<b>12:45-13:15</b>	A guided discussion of the information with a parent, a teacher and a guidance counselor <b>Ruth Altshuler-Ezrahi</b> , Mandel Institute
<b>13:15-13:35</b>	The ministry of education's plans and activities regarding school-family relations <b>Betty Rytwo, Shefi</b> , Ministry of Education
<b>13:35-14:20</b>	Break (a light lunch will be served)
<b>14:20-16:30</b>	<b>Session 3: Parent-teacher relations and the new technological environment</b> <b>Chair: Prof. Gustavo Mesch, member of the committee of experts</b>
<b>14:20-14:55</b>	Mobilizing technology to improve the connection between the family and the school: Advantages and disadvantages <b>Meyran Boniel-Nissim</b> , University of Haifa
<b>14:55-15:30</b>	Usage of new media channels by parents and teachers: Findings from the focus group <b>Dr. Gila Kurtz</b> , The College for Academic Studies in Or Yehuda
<b>15:30-16:30</b>	on the possibilities and limitations of promoting parent-teacher relations; Discussion with members of the committee of experts, and with <b>Betty Rytwo</b> of the Ministry of Education. Mediator: Prof. <b>Amiram Raviv</b>

<sup>4</sup> Two-way simultaneous translation was provided at the seminar.

## Appendix C: List of sources and additional background materials<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> All of the links to articles were correct as of February 16, 2014.

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פרנקנשטיין ק', (1977). "בית ספר ללא הורים", בתוך: **כנות ושוויון**, תל אביב, ספריית פועלים.

## Appendix A: Additional background materials<sup>6</sup>

In order to better prepare and to provide a wider perspective on the discourse we hope to stimulate in the meeting, we recommend the following reading material on relevant subjects.

Material on previous activity of the Initiative for Applied Education Research:

- [Summary document of the committee of experts on family-education system relations in early childhood \(kindergarten-third grade\) and their link to the development and success of the child in the education system](#)
- [Background materials for the work of the committee of experts on family-education system relations in early childhood \(kindergarten-third grade\) and their link to the development and success of the child in the education system \(Hebrew\)](#)

Relevant articles by presenters at the seminar:

- [Parental Involvement in Middle School: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies That Promote Achievement](#)
- [An article by Dr. Bilha Noy on the school, the home, and the connections between them \(Hebrew\)](#)
- [An article by Dr. Meyran Boniel-Nissim on the social network \(Facebook\) and ways in which it challenges the education system \(Hebrew\)](#)

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<sup>6</sup> All of the links to articles were correct as of February 16, 2014.