The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS) is built on a platform committed to Jewish values, continued academic excellence, and the practice of pluralism.

Our goal in crafting the strategic plan that you will read in the proceeding pages is to channel our collective aspirations into a working plan that will shape the future of our school. It will help each of us find a place to engage and contribute to the success of CESJDS.

Work on this plan started almost a year ago, and collaboration has been our guiding principle. The plan is a product of extensive board deliberation, input of parents and alumni, engagement of faculty and staff, outreach to the community, and the energy and vision of our inspiring school leadership. This outstanding working document has set our priorities for the coming years. It will guide us as we apply our energies and resources in a meaningful way to continue to advance the institution and community.

In these pages you will find a statement of our values, an articulation of the vision and purpose of the school, and a practical statement of mission. You will also find some very specific actions that we need to take as a community to position CESJDS for the future.

A strategic plan is a living document. We are committed to ensuring that this plan continues to reflect our aspirations and our needs. Please let us know what you think about this work and how it can be improved over time.

Most important, this plan should serve to catalyze action. To position for a vibrant Jewish future, we invite every parent, community member, and friend of the school to work together towards the goals in these pages. The test of our success is whether this plan enables our community to come together and channel our passion for a Jewish future into a stronger school.

Our best,
Rich Handloff and Dan Mendelson
Strategic Planning Co-Chairs

September 2014
Our Mission, Vision, and Purpose

MISSION / WHAT WE DO
We deliver an exemplary and inspiring general and Jewish education.

PURPOSE / WHY
To ensure a vibrant Jewish future.

VISION / OUTCOME
The growth of confident, compassionate thinkers who engage the world through Jewish values.
Our Core Values

Lifelong learning inspired by a strong, comprehensive academic program of general and Judaic studies that prioritizes critical, independent, and creative thought and expression.

Knowledge of and appreciation for the wisdom, spiritual depth, and ethical guidance of Judaism.

Lack of attention to God’s presence in the awe and wonder of our world and how we can sanctify our lives through the practice and experience of the Mitzvot.

An inextricable bond with the Jewish people – past, present, and future. A strong personal and ongoing relationship with Israel, its people, and its culture. An appreciation for and mastery of Hebrew as the language and voice of the Jewish people.

Passionate desire, active engagement, and individual/collective commitment to repair the world and make it more compassionate, just, and peaceful.

A principled commitment to the diversity of Jewish backgrounds, beliefs, and practices of our community of students, teachers, and parents. We unite through our shared values and cultivate respect and knowledge inspired by our differences.

A deep commitment to B’tzelem Elokim (each individual is created in the image of God), and Derekh Eretz (ethical decency).

A vibrant, caring, moral community based upon the concepts of Ahraiyut and Areyvut (individual and collective responsibility).
Our Key Strategic Priorities

**Accessibility**
PAGE 8
- Increase financial accessibility for families who value a Jewish day school education.
- Provide a Jewish day school education to a wide range of student learners.

**Educational Excellence**
PAGE 10
- Enhance and expand CESJDS’s exemplary general, Jewish, and values-based education.
- Attract, develop, and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and administration.

**Enrollment Management and Sustainability**
PAGE 12
- Increase enrollment and aspire to achieve a student population of 1,200.
- Create and support a best practices admission office.

**Governance and Leadership**
PAGE 14
- Develop and support a culture of leadership.
- Improve the accountability and effectiveness of the board.

**Institutional Advancement**
PAGE 16
- Raise $30 million to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the school.
- Expand development and marketing functions in size, quality, and expertise, consistent with other top independent schools.

**Community**
PAGE 18
- Nurture, support, and enhance the school community as a core CESJDS value.
- Develop programs and partnerships that leverage CESJDS’s resources for our school community and the broader community.
CESJDS has made significant investments over the past six years in the areas of enrichment and support. We will continue to explore avenues for an even wider group of student learners, while maintaining a rigorous academic program. CESJDS will provide professional development and training to classroom teachers and support staff, enabling them to effectively meet the needs of all types of learners.

**GOAL 1**
Increase financial accessibility for families who value a Jewish day school education.

The gift of a Jewish day school is one of the most significant contributions you can provide for your children and their future. We know that many families make deep sacrifices for this investment. CESJDS is committed to assisting families who, even with personal sacrifice, do not have the financial means to provide a Jewish day school education for their children. Our endowment campaign will play a critical role in achieving this objective. We will look at alternative tuition models and ensure that the tuition assistance program is communicated to all interested families.

**GOAL 2**
Provide a Jewish day school education to a wide range of student learners.

CESJDS has made significant investments over the past six years in the areas of enrichment and support. We will continue to explore avenues for an even wider group of student learners, while maintaining a rigorous academic program. CESJDS will provide professional development and training to classroom teachers and support staff, enabling them to effectively meet the needs of all types of learners.
Enhance and expand CESJDS’s exemplary general, Jewish, and values-based education.

We have an unyielding commitment to provide an exemplary general academic and Jewish education to our students. We will be intentional in the review and refinement of all aspects of our programming. This ensures that benchmarks and outcomes are achieved in all subjects at each stage of study. Continuity throughout subject matter, grade levels, and divisions will integrate a student’s knowledge development and associations.

A student’s middle school years are a critical time of growth. Our middle school will be re-envisioned in both form and function to evolve into the stimulating learning environment required for students during these transitional years.

Our Judaics program provides deep, values-based learning on many levels. We will continue to explore best practices and opportunities relevant to our Jewish education and its value to our students, families, and greater community.

An exemplary education is dependent on the work of exceptional teachers, staff, and administrators who are subject matter experts and thought leaders in their field.

As with our students, we will cultivate the leadership practice and potential of our faculty and staff professionals. We will provide an environment that encourages the growth and development of all CESJDS professionals and support them with the best training, mentoring, feedback, and learning opportunities.
Increase enrollment with an aspiration of achieving a student population of 1,200.

CESJDS’s sustainability relies on families who believe in the Jewish and general education that we offer their children and are committed to a future with our school. Understanding and fulfilling the needs of current families is vital so they remain with us from enrollment through graduation. We will also explore new means of connecting with prospective families who will ultimately enroll in our lower, middle, and upper school programs.

To ensure we have the required enrollment to meet future needs, we will enhance access points and develop programs that engage students and families from a wide range of observances, backgrounds, grade levels, and locations.

GOAL 1

Create and support a best practices admission office.

Meeting the enrollment needs defined by our strategic plan requires the development of an appropriately sized admission team. We will support this group with the required tools and training to communicate our program authentically and persuasively. The ultimate team will possess the necessary skill, ability, and perspective to strategically identify families from a broad range of backgrounds and locations who would value our educational approach and be a good fit for our school.

The office will also work collaboratively with key staff, faculty, and current parents to create a network of enthusiastic, knowledgeable advocates to demonstrate the school’s value, and support the recruitment and retention process.
Develop and support a culture of leadership.

We have enthusiastic parent and community support for the exceptional education we offer and the outcomes we cultivate. Positioning the school for continued success and growth requires diverse leaders representative of our pluralistic school community, combined with their expertise. An ideal Board will be committed to and educated in the complexities of our pluralistic approach so they can provide the most comprehensive counsel on meeting our goals and objectives.

This group will also ensure the continued excellence and availability of resources to meet the needs of our community for the next 50 years.

Improve the accountability and effectiveness of the Board.

To achieve our goals and desired growth requires established measurements to assess our progress and allow for adjustments based on new information. We must continually evaluate our governing board and operational structure to ensure we are functioning at the highest capacity possible. By maintaining transparent communication with our larger school community, we will demonstrate a culture that inspires others to step forth and serve.
Institutional Advancement

GOAL 1

Raise $30 million to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the school.

Inspiring donors to invest in our school means connecting to what is most valued about CESJDS, the benefits it provides to our children and community, and how its sustained growth will be their contribution to a bright future.

In order to provide the facilities, programs, and preparation our children will need to build their legacy of becoming leaders who repair the world, we will expand our efforts and clarify the value we offer as a school. We will enhance our reputation as a worthy investment option for donor prospects both inside and outside our immediate community.

GOAL 2

Expand development and marketing functions in size, quality, and expertise, consistent with other top independent schools.

Many of our strategic goals rely directly upon our ability to understand the strengths of our school, where we have our greatest success, the opportunities and barriers we face, and who we best serve. By deeply understanding these core elements, we are able to identify families who may value what we provide, determine the best means to reach them, and present a compelling story.

The benefit of our diverse community also presents a complex challenge in the wide range of locations in which prospective families and donors may reside. Therefore, a strategic, integrated marketing plan that is well-managed and adequately funded is key to achieving our desired objectives.
GOAL 2

Develop programs and partnerships that leverage CESJDS’s resources for our school community and the broader community.

A quality of Tikkun Olam is the ability to look outward and see what is needed in service to the world. As a school organization, we are positioned to be a living demonstration of the values that define us. By being strategic in the use of our facilities, exploring services that make a positive impact on others, and sharing our best wisdom and thought leadership with organizations beyond our immediate school family, we extend ourselves to the greater community in which we serve.

GOAL 1

Nurture, support, and enhance the school community as a core CESJDS value.

Our community is one of the most defining and valuable aspects of our school. Participation, service, perspective, support, guidance, enthusiasm, volunteerism, kindness—without the involvement and contributions of our parents and supporters, CESJDS would not have grown to be the school it is today.

We will intentionally foster the support and training of all those who are moved to play an active role in the life of our school. Providing new opportunities for leadership and engagement will enhance the vibrancy of our learning environment.

The truest demonstration of our community’s authenticity is the connections maintained long after a student’s graduation, and the impact our graduates have on the Jewish community and the broader world. This is the legacy we seek to embody.
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