



SEATTLE JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Seattle Jewish Community School Profile

Happy is the generation where the great listen to the small; all the more so, that in such a generation, the small will listen to the great. -Rosh Hashanah 25b

Who We Are

SJCS was founded in 1991 when eight families envisioned a neighborhood school that would inspire its community's children to embark upon lifelong journeys of learning and Jewish engagement. Today, our 90-student elementary school perpetuates the founding commitment to a community-based, egalitarian approach that promotes Jewish identity and practice while remaining unaffiliated with any single Jewish movement. Every day SJCS students are guided and challenged to comprehend with both the mind and the heart. As a result, our graduates emerge with a confident sense of self rooted in their efforts and accomplishments, friendships, positive identity, and the support of a strong and nurturing community of adults. SJCS alumni thrive across the full spectrum of excellent secular and Judaic middle schools, high schools, and institutions of higher learning. Through their children's journeys, SJCS families grow and deepen their connection to the greater Jewish community.

SJCS began as Seattle Jewish Primary School (SJPS) with a class of kindergartners housed at Congregation Beth Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in the Wedgwood neighborhood. Debra Butler led the school as its first principal from 1991-1995 and shepherded the program as it grew to include 1st and 2nd grades in its next temporary location in Northeast Seattle.

During the following decade, Head of School Joyce Shane expanded the program to 5th grade, and SJCS re-located to another temporary space at Temple Beth Am – a Reform congregation, also in the Wedgwood neighborhood – to accommodate enrollment growth. An award-winning Judaic Studies program was grounded in a passionate commitment to Torah study and tikkun olam – and it was (and is) enhanced by a lively Jewish music program. At the same time, General Studies' growth was strengthened by the addition of a Learning Specialist tasked with school-wide assessment, extension, and remediation.

After Joyce's retirement for health reasons, Debra returned to SJCS as Head of School and led the transition to a rented, full-service elementary school campus. SJCS was able to add an on-site before- and after-school enrichment program; P.E. instruction in a dedicated gym; a kosher hot-lunch program; a laptop equipped library; and inquiry-based science.

In early 2008, our rented location came on the market for sale. SJCS professional and volunteer leadership acted decisively to purchase the campus as a permanent home. With exceptional support from trustee, parent, alumni, community, and institutional donors, SJCS purchased its building in late 2008, after having raised an unprecedented \$3 million in only five months. The purchase added 40% more space to the school, including a 3rd floor equipped with a science lab, as well as an adjacent home that is now rented to Kadima, Seattle's Reconstructionist community. Having assured a permanent home for future SJCS generations that is also positioned as a center of Jewish life in the Northend, Debra announced that she would step down as Head after her fourth year of this second tenure of leadership.

SJCS has expanded its K-5th structure to include Chai Fives, an early childhood option. Programmatically, SJCS is focused on curricular development that takes an integrated approach to scope and sequencing of General and Judaic studies. Primary advancement goals are increased enrollment (particularly at the transitional kindergarten and kindergarten entry points), and completion of the capital campaign that is now at 65% of its \$5 million goal.

What We Believe

Fostering intellectual curiosity, creativity, respect for diverse points of view, and joy in learning are core academic goals. Creating meaningful, tangible, and indelible Jewish experience is our core spiritual goal.

Our teachers work collaboratively to weave together a seamless, integrated curriculum that attends to the academic, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of the elementary school student. Small class sizes – on average, the student to teacher ratio is 13:1 – allow teachers to differentiate instruction, accommodating a range of learning styles.

Dereh eretz is the defining value we model for students, and each week we publicly honor children who have been exemplars of this concept. We strive to inspire passionate engagement with Judaism, the Jewish people, and Israel by fostering Jewish literacy and values in an atmosphere that celebrates diversity of opinion and practice.

We encourage children to find paths that utilize their unique gifts and encourage discoveries that reveal strengths amidst their challenges. We guide children in building a vocabulary of kindness and a code of behavior rooted in timeless Jewish values and responsive to the ethical and moral questions of the present day. We challenge students to grow - academically and intellectually, spiritually and emotionally - and to put forth their best efforts in all of these endeavors. We inspire children to carry their positive senses of Jewish identity, confidence, and questions into the greater world – and to make it better.

Outcomes We Create

SJCS fosters a passion for inquiry grounded in a foundation of Jewish literacy and positive identity. Critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills are emphasized in all aspects of the curriculum. In addition to ensuring that each student has a strong foundation and knowledge base in both secular and Jewish subjects, our approach balances individual responsibility and cooperative learning skills.

SJCS alumni find success across the full spectrum of middle and high school environments including Jewish day schools; independent schools; and advanced learning opportunities in public schools. SJCS graduates gain entry to the programs of their choice, and they thrive academically and socially as they continue their studies at the next level.

SJCS alumni attend outstanding college and universities including Brandeis University, Brown University, Columbia University/Jewish Theological Seminary, New York University, Whitman College, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and University of Washington. SJCS alumni are active participants in Israel programs during high school and college. They lead in youth groups, as b'nai mitzvah tutors, and as counselors at Jewish summer camps.

SJCS builds a school community that extends beyond the student and the classroom. Among Jewish day school parents in a 36-school national survey, SJCS led in parent satisfaction in 13 key areas, including:

- Parents who strongly felt part of a community
- Opportunity for parent involvement in the school
- Desired Jewish development for their child
- Culture of caring, respect, and trust

The Leadership Opportunity

The Head of School – with the support of the professional staff, Board of Trustees, and school community – will have a unique opportunity to steward the growth of our thriving community. Major goals include growing student enrollment; closing The Campaign for SJCS (our capital campaign); achieving PNAIS accreditation; and, continuing the growth of a true center of Jewish community in North Seattle that is anchored by our school.

Our next Head of School – the third in SJCS' 19-year history – will have the leadership skills, experience, and creative vision to successfully chart and navigate a course of sustainable growth.

Supported by a collaborative faculty/staff, our permanent campus, and a parent body that expresses extraordinarily high levels of satisfaction, the next Head will:

- Articulate and advocate for the SJCS mission and vision for the future
- Act as the instructional leader; champion educational excellence; and, supervise and support teachers
- Serve as the school's primary executive by managing its program, operations, and staff; as entrusted by the Board of Trustees
- Advance the SJCS mission through active involvement in admissions, marketing, and development activities
- Represent the school to all constituencies, including the greater Jewish community

Qualities and Qualifications

- Demonstrated commitment to educational excellence
- Outstanding communicator who actively articulates the school's mission and vision to all stakeholders
- Proven manager able to pursue the school's vision and model its values while balancing day-to-day demands of teachers, staff, parents, students, and community stakeholders
- Exceptional problem solver who employs flexible thinking in service of strategic goals

Interested candidates are invited to submit electronically a cover letter, resume, statement of educational philosophy and practice, and the names and contact information of three references to: headsearch@seattlejcs.org.

About the Seattle Jewish Community School

Mission

SJCS provides an excellent, egalitarian K-5 General and Judaic education that promotes Jewish identity and practice, respect for diversity, responsibility for our world, and lifelong learning.

SJCS Accreditation and Affiliations

- Accredited by the State of Washington
- RAVSAK (Jewish Community Day School Network), Member
- Washington Federation of Independent Schools, Member
- Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools, Candidate Member
- Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education
- Beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle and the Samis Foundation

Contact

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