

October 5, 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Shana Tova!

What a great start to the school year—there’s sure been a lot happening. Give me a few moments to share some of it.

Walking through the halls and seeing our kids in their *new uniforms* always makes me wonder if I woke-up and drove the car to the wrong school. They look amazing (at least until the end of the day when the boys start looking like boys do at the end of a day).

How about that playground? I never would have guessed how exciting a new **playground** could be, but when you see the kids running around out there you sure learn fast. Congratulations to Lorne Weiner and so many other volunteers who gave their all to make it happen.

The CJA Board and Administration team hosted a *New Parent Evening* at the Canyon Meadows Golf Club. It was a great night where parents, new to the school, were able to meet one another. As well, they had a chance to talk to members of administration and the Board to learn what the school is all about. It was a fun night for all and I expect this will become an annual event.

Last year several Board members, lead by Ruth Spivak, met with faculty to find a way to share with parents information on the school’s programs. Thanks to our faculty for holding our first ever *Curriculum Evenings*. Thanks to so many parents for being there. The presentations were excellent and very informative. The feedback has been positive from all corners.

There’s been a lot of *good news* for our faculty. Last spring, [Mr. Stilman and Mr. Suissa](#) were shortlisted for the Governor General’s Award for Excellence in teaching Canadian history. They are up against twenty other teachers from *across* Canada. The envelope on this will be opened in the coming weeks. Good luck!

Recently, as many of you have probably heard, the CJA has been shortlisted for the *Weston Award* for Excellence in Education for our Language Arts program. We were chosen along with a very select group of other schools from the 650 or so Alberta schools that were eligible. The analysis was performed by the Fraser

Institute and is based on our students’ performance over the past five years. Congratulations teachers and kids. The winner will be announced in early November.

Wondering how we’re doing in *Math and Science*? In a word, outstanding! Give me a few seconds to show you. The OECD through its Programme for International Student Assessments (PISA) tests how well students are prepared for future challenges. [The latest results](#) came out several months ago and showed that of the **65 countries/economies** participating Canada was near the top in both math

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and science. Alberta did even better. Only Finland and China stood above Alberta in science. In math, Alberta ranked behind only China, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Finland. Alberta results stood significantly above the performance of such countries as Germany, Russian Federation, Israel and the U.K. It’s no surprise why countries such as Swe-

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

- Message from the President
- The Boardroom-A Look Inside
- The Who’s Who
- Focus Areas for 2011-2012
- Board Committees
- Why Volunteer?
- UJA Cell-a-Thon

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D FROM P. 1)

den and Britain are looking very closely at Alberta's education model to learn how to improve their own. How does the C.J.A. do when *compared to other Alberta schools*? Exceptionally well. You can see for yourself if you go to the [Fraser Institute](#) and use their school comparison tool that allows you to chart your school's results in a particular subject against any other school (see charts below). You should bear in mind that most private schools pick and choose their students by having them write entrance exams. At our school we welcome all with open arms. The CJA's results in its Math and Science programs are very near the top in Alberta, which is tops in Canada, which is very near the top in the world. Hold it...I almost forgot to mention that this is all accomplished through a program where nearly 40% of the day is dedicated to Judaic studies. Now that's really outstanding!

Do we rest on our successes? Not a chance. We have a very *innovative faculty* that is always looking for ways to improve the education experience they provide to our children. Last year they

introduced the [Excellence in Writing Program](#), which has met with great enthusiasm. This year the JUMP Math program is being tested with several faculty members having begun training. There's also much excitement here as it will be a benefit to all students from underachievers to overachievers. Our faculty has introduced digital tools such as Successmaker, IXL and Rosetta Stone. They have much more in store, too. Stay tuned.

Our Administration team is constantly *evaluating* all of our programs and alongside faculty, looking for ways to improve them. Unique to our school, is a Board established cycle of external formal evaluation for our various programs. This year an evaluation of our Science program will be performed. Administration and faculty will review the evaluation finding ways to advance what is already a superb program.

In the business world, it is the norm that management and employees undergo various levels of evaluation. The same thing happens at the CJA with our faculty and Principal. The primary goal of these evaluations is professional

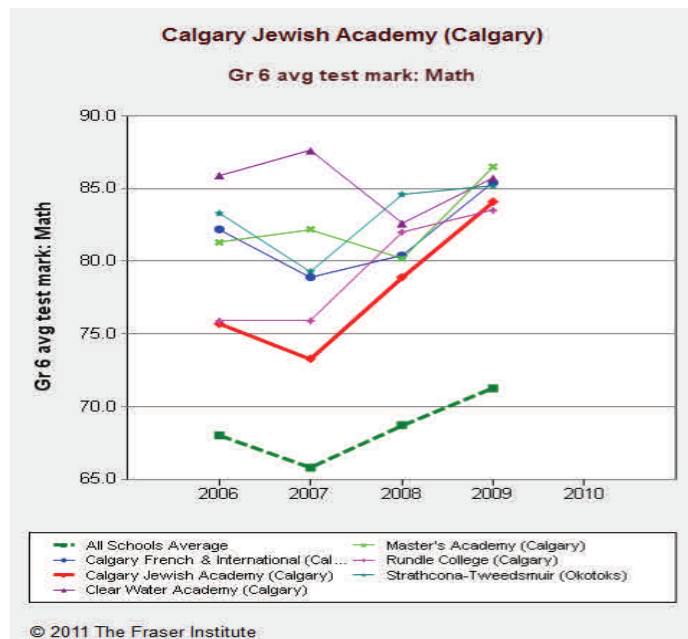
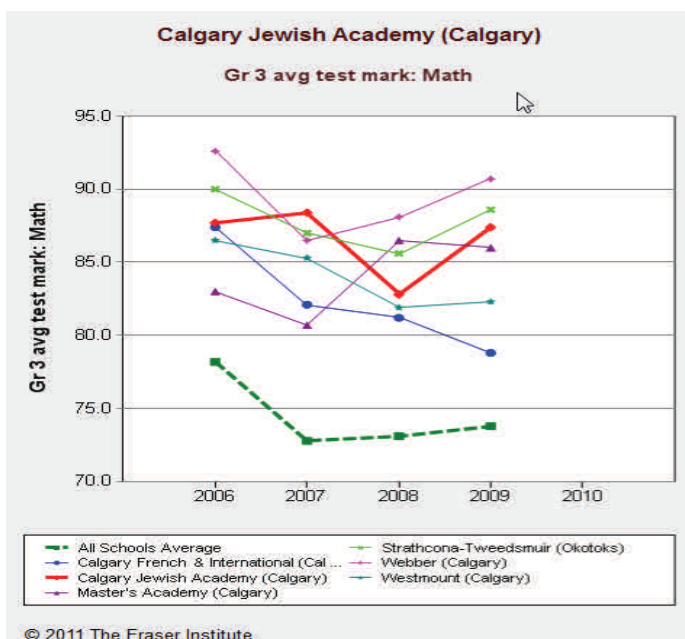
development leading to an ever improving educational environment for the kids and professional satisfaction for the faculty.

Last year the Board, approved the CJA's pursuing *accreditation* from the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS). Only three schools in all of Alberta that provide an elementary level education have achieved this. The process is lengthy, perhaps a few years, but will prove invaluable to us in the long term. In essence, the process guarantees that your school is headed in the right direction. It ensures that the school is delivering a quality education to its students and can continue doing so in the future. We're very excited as this program begins.

CJA parents expect the best—the board knows this; faculty and administration work so hard to provide it. Be a *proud supporter* of the CJA!

Eric Kettner recently began his two year term as President

The charts below were created on the [Fraser Institute website](#). The CJA's Math scores ranked it amongst the very best in the province. These charts show how the CJA did (bold red line) versus a sampling of the top sixteen Fraser ranked schools of the 650 in the province. **Each of these schools require students to write entrance exams before being accepted.** The CJA welcomes all students and accomplishes these top grades in a program where 38% of each school day is devoted to Judaics.



THE BOARDROOM—A LOOK INSIDE

The Executive (or Board as it's often referred to) of the CJA is far less mysterious than many might think. Its work tends to be in the background due the nature of its responsibilities. Its focus is on the *long range*, bigger picture stuff.

What does the Executive do? There are three primary responsibilities:

1) Fiduciary—The Board is responsible for seeing that the CJA meets all requisite legal obligations and remains financially sustainable. Also, and very importantly, the Board is the “keeper of the trust.” It's the Board's duty to oversee the school's Mission. We ask ourselves if what we're doing as a school is what the Mission tells us we should be doing. Every once and a while the Mission has to be put under the microscope to see that it properly reflects our school community's needs.

2) Strategic Planning—This is an ongoing process that sets out goals and action plans to help management (a.k.a. Administration) achieve the Mission.

3) Generative—This is a tough one to describe. It's the part of the story where Board members jump into their time machines and envision what the school should look like for our kids in the coming years, but also what the school might look like for our kids' kids.

What doesn't the Executive do?

The Board has no direct involvement in day-to-day or operational stuff like staffing, scheduling, curriculum planning, etc. We hire an expert to tend to all of that—the Principal. Mr. Karmel is the one and only CJA employee that answers to the Board. He is the one responsible for the operation of the school.

In future newsletters we'll talk more about the Board. If you have any *questions* that you'd like answered, send them to eric.kettner@cja.ab.ca and we'll do our best to answer them in this space.

Who's Who?

President—Eric Kettner

Treasurer—Aviva Cheuk

V.P. Finance—Bev Sklar

Subsidy Chair—Mindy Joffe

V.P. External—Aviva Horwitz

Secretary—Amit Goren

Past President—Tracy Forman

Communications—Adam Brener

Parent Association—Bonnie Fine

Fundraising—Marnie Bondar

Education Chair—Ruth Spivak

Infrastructure—Stan Eisenberg

Parent Relations—Josh Benjamin

Interested in joining the CJA 2012-2013 Executive?
Do you have any questions for or about the Board?
Please contact *Bev Sklar* (bevsklar@shaw.ca) or
Aviva Horwitz (avivah@telus.net)

FOCUS AREAS FOR 2011-2012

It's a busy year for the Board with a number of major initiatives at hand. Here are a few things that we'll be tackling:

1) Strategic Plan—There was a new plan put in place in September, 2008. Its time to start fresh. As a kickoff to this we'll be taking a very close look at our Mission/Vision/Value statements.

2) Marketing & Communication—Alongside Administration, our Communication Committee will be looking at our existing marketing strategies and what opportunities we have to improve on them.

3) Bylaws—Our existing bylaws are twenty years old. A re-writing of them has been ongoing for sometime now. The goal is to bring a new set to the membership for approval at the A.G.M.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The majority of the work of Board is done at the committee level. Be it planning an amazing new playground, raising funds for a new technological endeavor or planning for the future –it all happens through the dedicated work of individuals on any one of a number of committees.

These committees are typically about six to eight people strong and manned by Board members, Administration, faculty and parents. We even have experts from outside of the school community helping us out.

If you have a keen interest in helping-out and a desire to share your time and expertise to benefit your kids' school *please* consider joining a committee that interests you. It's a great introduction to Board members and to the work of the Board. Here is a sampling of Committees seeking members:

Fundraising & Community Building (Chaired by Marnie Bondar) There's a lot of events planned this year, many of them new and very exciting.

Attraction & Retention (Chaired by Kim Chulsky)

Communications (Chaired by Adam Brener) This committee was formerly named Publicity, but its focus is expanding to areas such as external communications and marketing.

Education (chaired by Ruth Spivak) Members come from Administration, faculty and the parent body. They're currently seeking parents from preschool and Division 1.

Strategic Planning (co-chaired by Aviva Horwitz, Tracy Forman and Eric Kettner) The 2008 Strategic Plan has run its course and work on a new one will begin shortly.

Educational Technology (chaired by Mr. Suissa) This is not a Board committee, but rather an Administrative Group looking to bring technology to the classroom.

100th Anniversary Celebration (Chair TBA) The CJA will be celebrating the centennial of its founding in 2013 with a number of events.

Why volunteer at the CJA? Rory Hornstein was the superhuman Volunteer Coordinator for the new playground project. In an email she wrote at the beginning of September, she so beautifully described how it felt seeing the project through to completion. Here's an excerpt:

Jodi (Goldstein) and I were at the playground waiting for the first short recess today. At 10:30 am when the buzzer went, a sea of uniforms raced for the structure. Everyone from Grade 1 to Junior High were exploring, squealing with delight, sharing, cooperating, taking turns, laughing, smiling...I took a 5 minute video which starts with the soccer field - EMPTY - and practically every student at the CJA on the new playground structure. I spent time taping every piece of equipment - without prompting hearing, "This is amazing!" "We need more recesses!!" With tears in our eyes, literally, Jodi and I were running and playing with them.

Truly one of the highlights of my life. We would be so fortunate to have more parents be given the opportunity to experience what I have in the last few months and have the finale be these kids appreciative faces.

If you are interested in joining a committee or know somebody who might be, please contact Bev Sklar (bevsklar@shaw.ca) or Aviva Horwitz (avivah@telus.net).

U.J.A. CELL-A-THON

The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) is an **important supporter** of the CJA. Without their financial assistance higher school fees would be inevitable. It's vital that we do our part to support the UJA annual campaign by both contributing and volunteering. The Board will be hosting a UJA Cell-a-Thon on Tuesday, October 11th at 6pm at the school (dinner will be provided). We need as many volunteers as we can get. Let Sue know at the office or send her an email (prices@cja.ab.ca).



NEWS FROM THE CJA EXECUTIVE