



The Calgary
Jewish Academy

בית הספר
היהודי בקלגרי

The Calgary Jewish Academy Education Report

2024-2027



Accountability Statement for the Education Plan

Accredited Funded Private School Authorities

The Education Plan for the Calgary Jewish Academy, commencing May 2024, was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the Private Schools Regulation and the Ministerial Grants Regulation. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved the 2024-2027 Education Plan on May 5, 2024.



Bryant Frydberg
Shannon Smith-Albert
Co-Chairs CJA Board of Directors

Message from Administration

Joyce Kerr - Principal, Head of School

The information included in this report celebrates the Calgary Jewish Academy and all it has to offer. We are an independent Jewish day school that is dedicated to following the Alberta Education requirements while fostering a love of Judaism and Jewish identity. Our focus every day is on each student arriving at a safe space (CJA) ready to learn. We take each student from where they are at, and provide learning opportunities that challenge and build curiosity. Our overall goal is to empower our students to be contributing members of the greater Calgary communities.

This Education Plan connects the results from the 2023 Provincial Accountability Pillar survey taken by students, parents, and staff to our CJA Strategic Plan.

A Profile of the School Authority

Who are we at the Calgary Jewish Academy?

The Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) is an accredited private school. The CJA provides an excellent hybrid of the Alberta Education Program and Jewish Studies. This dual curriculum provides students with opportunities to connect to their Jewish culture and identity through their learning. Our school not only equips students with the essential skills and knowledge needed for the future, but also instills in them a unique perspective rooted in Jewish values and traditions, ensuring they navigate life's challenges with resilience, empathy, and a strong sense of identity.

The CJA's total enrollment is 221 students as of May 2024. The CJA is firmly rooted in the Calgary Jewish community. In its present and previous forms, it has been in existence for 110 years, serving some families for as many as five generations. The CJA is more than just a school, we are mishpacha (family). We are a caring community that consists of faculty, staff, parents, grandparents, alumni and friends who work together to support each child's Jewish journey.

Families choose the CJA because they seek a challenging and supportive environment where they can be partners in their child's learning. An integrated curriculum guides students toward academic excellence, strong critical thinking skills, and pride in their Jewish heritage.

The CJA strives to be a leader within the Calgary Jewish community, working closely with the Calgary Jewish Federation, the Paperny JCC, multiple synagogues, Halpern Akiva Academy, and our friends in Israel at partner schools and organizations. We work to build partnerships with schools in Israel as well as Jewish Day Schools worldwide.

The CJA building sits on land that we acknowledge is traditionally not our own. The CJA is located on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional territory of the Blackfoot, which includes: the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations, the Stoney Nakoda, including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The City of Calgary is also the traditional homeland of the Historic

Northwest Métis and is home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. At the CJA, our land acknowledgement is read at the start of every week during morning announcements, as well as at the beginning of all school assemblies.

At this time, the CJA does not have any students who identify as FNMI. The CJA students deepen their knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, FNMI culture and traditions throughout the year. Students are provided with educational opportunities which align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations. We recognize that infusing Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives into the educational curriculum is a way to contribute towards the goal of reconciliation by providing students with an opportunity to learn about the Indigenous people with whom they share the land, and on whose ancestral territories the CJA currently resides. We hope to make connections with First Nations elders/guests in the future to develop cultural bridges between the Jewish and FNMI communities.

As a Jewish Day School we are grateful that we get to use this space to teach many students their Jewish culture and religion, and to make lifelong memories through important connections, new activities and education. We promise to use this land kindly and that our students and staff will respect this land.

Stakeholder Engagement

How does the Calgary Jewish Academy actively engage stakeholders to inform the development of local priorities and plans?

We take great pride in the high level of parental involvement at the CJA. Both parents and teachers express a profound sense of satisfaction with this collaborative approach. The active engagement of parents in their child's educational journey is paramount to us, and we consider them essential partners in the learning process. Through regular communication channels, including parent-teacher conferences, open forums, and feedback sessions, we ensure that parents are well-informed and empowered to contribute their valuable insights and perspectives. This robust partnership not only strengthens the educational experience for each student but also fosters a sense of trust and confidence between the school and our dedicated parent community.

Overall, the Alberta Education Assurance Measure Results, completed in the spring of 2023, demonstrated that 89% of CJA parents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to be involved in decisions about their child's school. (APORI, Fall 2023, p.105) The CJA is strengthened by the commitment and dedication of our parents and our teachers also reflected that they are 100% satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity for parents or guardians to be involved in decisions about their child's overall education. (APORI, Fall 2023, p.108)

Looking Ahead

Calgary Jewish Academy's Three Year Plan

The CJA Board is undergoing the extensive task of developing the next Strategic Plan, taking the CJA into 2024 - 2028. Our Board of Directors works to develop Strategic Plans for the Calgary Jewish Academy in collaboration with the Head of School. They are a Governance Board with operations solely left to the Head of School. Our Head of School works closely with the Leadership Team to ensure the implementation of curriculum and community building.

Key components of the new Strategic Plan include:

- ✧ Rewriting of the vision statement
- ✧ Rewriting of the purpose statement
- ✧ Outline the key values “Middot”
- ✧ Building Assurance Plan priorities
 - ✧ Enhance Jewish Identity & Cultural Connections
 - ✧ Support Student Growth & Achievement
 - ✧ Ensure Quality Teaching & Leadership
 - ✧ Board & Community Engagement
 - ✧ Ensure Financial Sustainability

In crafting our educational roadmap for the upcoming years, the CJA has meticulously analyzed the findings of the Alberta Education Assurance Survey in conjunction with the directives outlined in our Board's Strategic Plan, which is nearing completion. By synergizing these two vital sources of feedback and guidance, we aim to forge a comprehensive three-year plan aimed at enhancing every facet of our educational landscape. With a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement and a deep-rooted dedication to providing the best possible educational experience for our students, this collaborative effort will pave the way for transformative growth and innovation at the CJA. Annually, the CJA will review and publish a three-year plan, considering the latest results from provincial and local measures, and adjust based on changes to outcomes, measures, strategies and plan implementations.

Goal 1: Enhance Engagement in Judaics Curriculum

Assurance Domains: Student Growth & Achievement

Local and Societal Context

Teaching and Leading

Learning Supports

Desired Outcomes:

Implement innovative teaching methods and interactive learning experiences to ignite student interest and passion for Hebrew Language learning and Judaic curriculum classes, reinforcing the core purpose of the CJA.

Strategies:

- ✧ Provide more experiential learning opportunities surrounding Jewish culture and holiday celebrations
- ✧ Engage students to take the lead in sharing their passion for and knowledge of Judaism and Jewish history
- ✧ Leading up to holidays, the physical space at the school is transformed in the spirit of the holiday
- ✧ Monthly newsletters include educational information for our parents to keep them informed and educated alongside their children
- ✧ Bringing Judaism and Jewish practices into all of our learning

Measures:

- ✧ Increase in Jewish pride amongst our student, staff and parents
- ✧ Increased engagement by student during Judaic Studies classes
- ✧ Increased excitement in preparing for Jewish holiday celebrations

This goal aligns with the objectives outlined in the CJA's November 2023 AERR, specifically addressing Student Learning & Engagement and Citizenship. As a dual curriculum faith-based school, we are focusing on enhancing engagement in the Judaic portion of our curriculum and elevating our overall academic standards. We will utilize future Alberta Education Assurance survey results, as well as locally developed surveys, to gather information and reflect on our goals and achievements.

Goal 2: Cultivate Meaningful Learning Experiences Across Curricula

Assurance Domains: Teaching and Leading
Student Growth and Achievement
Learning Supports

Desired Outcomes:

Empower teachers with professional development opportunities aimed at seamlessly integrating Judaic Studies and Alberta Ed curriculum courses, fostering connections between subjects and promoting relevance and engagement in learning at the CJA.

Strategies:

- ✧ Professional Development specific to curriculum areas
- ✧ Collaboration time amongst staff
- ✧ Staff sharing of best practices
- ✧ Building capacity and confidence amongst staff to try new things through the support of the Administration and Leadership teams
- ✧ Finding direct links that connect the Alberta Curriculum to Judaic Studies
- ✧ Reinforcing Alberta Curriculum skills through a Judaic Studies lens
- ✧ Expanded offerings of Options and Elective classes for Grades 6-9

Measures:

- ✧ Alberta Education Assurance (AEA) survey results - AB Curriculum
- ✧ Locally developed survey results - Judaic Studies
- ✧ Teachers will develop units and lessons that integrate Alberta Curriculum with Judaic Studies themes

This goal aligns with the objectives outlined in CJA's November 2023 AERR, specifically addressing Student Learning & Engagement, Citizenship and Education Quality. We are focusing on cultivating meaningful learning experiences to bridge our Alberta Curriculum with our Judaic Studies. By intertwining and elevating both curricula, we aim to create a more cohesive and enriching educational experience. We will use future AEA survey results, as well as locally developed surveys, to collect information and reflect on our goals and achievements.

Goal 3: Cultivate a Unified *Kehillah* (Community)

Assurance Domains: Local & Societal Context
Student Growth and Achievement

Desired Outcomes:

Establish a comprehensive community-building initiative that encourages open communication, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders (students, parents and staff) including the Calgary Jewish community, fostering a sense of ownership, pride and responsibility for the success, growth and sustainability of the CJA.

Strategies:

- ✧ Increased participation of CJA students, parents and staff in community wide events
- ✧ Building an alumni network and increase engagement
- ✧ Showcase that CJA has something special to offer our Jewish youth, families and community. Students can get a good education anywhere, but the CJA has added value, through our dual curriculum and opportunities for our students to build their Jewish identity

Measures:

- ✧ Pride in saying that “I’m part of the CJA family”
- ✧ Increased enrollment at the CJA
- ✧ More family engagement
- ✧ Alumni returning to the CJA for holiday celebrations
- ✧ Post CJA Jewish involvement (summer camps, youth group, Hillel, Federation, Jewish organizations)

This goal aligns with the objectives outlined in CJA’s November 2023 AERR, specifically addressing Citizenship, Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments and Parental involvement. Our focus is on fostering a unified *kehillah* (community) where all stakeholders feel proud to be part of the CJA family. We strive to inspire our students and staff to embody and reflect our school’s core values of honesty, respect and responsibility. Guided by the principle from the Talmud Bavli (Shavuot 39a), “Kol Yisrael arevim zeh la’zeh” - All the Jewish people are responsible one person to another - we aim to strengthen our communal bonds and collective commitment to these values.

Budget Summary

Allocating Resources to Achieve our Goals

As an Alberta independent school we will once again receive partial funding from Alberta Education for the 2024-2025 school year as do all accredited independent schools. The budget must serve as a planning, operational and control mechanism for results and resources, as well as the basis for board approval of school programs and resource deployment.

The CJA budget for 2024-2025 was approved by the board on February 1, 2024.

| Revenue | 2024/2025 Budget |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Alberta Education | \$ 1,851,154 |
| Tuition Fees | \$ 2,222,161 |
| Gifts and Donations | \$ 545,401 |
| Other Revenue | \$ 373,889 |
| Total | \$ 4,992,605 |

| Expenses | 2024/2025 Budget |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries & Benefits | \$ 3,904,820 |
| Services, Contracts & Supplies | \$955,808 |
| Total | \$ 4,860,628 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Operating Surplus/Deficit | \$ 131,977 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|

Plan for Implementation

Turning Vision into Action

To ignite student interest and passion for Hebrew Language learning and Judaic curriculum classes, the CJA will adopt several strategies that align with its identity as a Jewish day school. First, the school will continue to invest in technology enhanced learning tools such as iPads, Chromebooks and educational software, including resources specifically tailored to Hebrew language and Judaic studies. Teachers will receive training on effectively using these technologies to create engaging lessons that integrate Jewish heritage and values. Regular feedback sessions with teachers and students, along with periodic assessments of student engagement and performance, will help monitor progress. Additionally, the CJA will incorporate interactive and experiential learning by providing materials for hands-on projects, organizing field trips to local Jewish historical sites and institutions, and inviting guest speakers from the Jewish community. Professional development workshops will be conducted to train teachers on experiential learning techniques and curriculum integration, ensuring these experiences are rooted in Jewish culture. Progress will be monitored through classroom observations, student surveys, and performance metrics.

To seamlessly integrate Judaic Studies and Alberta Ed curriculum courses, the CJA will focus on interdisciplinary curriculum development. Teachers will have dedicated time for collaboration and access to curriculum development tools, including resources that connect secular subjects with Jewish teachings. Interdisciplinary teaching workshops and collaborative planning sessions will be organized to support this integration. The progress of these initiatives will be reviewed through lesson plan evaluations and regular interdisciplinary team meetings. CJA will allocate a budget for external training programs and in-house training sessions. Teachers will attend relevant conferences, webinars, and seminars that cover both Alberta Curriculum and Judaic Education. Monitoring processes will include performance reviews, teacher feedback, and professional development logs.

The CJA will integrate these strategies into its education plan to ensure clarity and coherence. The necessary resources include budget allocations for technology, training programs, community events, and project funding. Human resources will involve dedicated time for teacher collaboration, hiring specialized trainers, and

community volunteer involvement. Material resources will include educational technology, curriculum development tools, and communication platforms. Professional learning will be a cornerstone of this plan, with regular workshops and training sessions on innovative teaching methods, interdisciplinary curriculum development, and community engagement. Teachers will also participate in relevant external programs, conferences, and webinars that blend secular and Judaic education. In-house development will continue through mentorship, peer learning sessions, and collaborative planning meetings. Monitoring processes will involve regular feedback from students, teachers, and community members through surveys, forums, and meetings. Performance metrics will track student engagement, teacher performance, and community involvement. Periodic review meetings will assess progress, discuss challenges, and make necessary adjustments. By implementing these strategies and processes, the CJA aims to create a dynamic and engaging educational environment that supports the growth and success of its students, teachers, and community, while staying true to its Jewish values and traditions.

The goal of the CJA is to always reflect on where we are and how we can become better. We are a community where all stakeholders are valued and we welcome feedback to ensure we are moving forward in the right direction. We are all lifelong learners and want to ensure that our school, which has been in existence for over 110 years continues to be a “Gem in the community”. We need to listen to each other, learn from each other and work together to build on our successes.

