1. About the School

CJDS was founded in 1998 by a group of lay leaders who saw in Columbus an unmet need for progressive, pluralistic Jewish education. Our founding families and educators turned to the Abraham Joshua Heschel School’s model of integrated secular and Jewish education and sought to replicate it in Columbus. After 11 years in temporary locations, CJDS partnered with the Jewish Community Center preschool in 2009 and moved into a beautiful new building. CJDS still resides at this seven-acre location replete with trails, wetlands, and a pond. Our educational model relies heavily upon a commitment to outdoor, experiential education, which utilizes our beautiful surroundings. This model, along with the help of a dedicated team of lay leaders, medical professional volunteers, and staff, helped us remain open throughout the 20-21 and 21-22 school years.

Today, CJDS serves approximately 60 students from all over central Ohio in grades K-5, representing multiple denominations. Our integrated Jewish and secular studies curriculum, guided by the teachings of Abraham Joshua Heschel, places particular focus on social justice and tikkun olam, alongside STEM, environmental stewardship, service learning, and the arts. With strong recruitment and Columbus’ current record pace of growth, we anticipate rising enrollment numbers in the coming years.

CJDS is fully accredited through the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). Our outstanding faculty are guided by three core principles; intellectual sophistication, social responsibility, and personal authenticity. Our educators care deeply about each child and work as a team to equip students with the tools and courage to ask probing and honest questions of themselves and the world around them. They do so by nurturing students’ curiosity, providing the safety needed to take risks, and fostering the joyful zest for the adventure that is forming one’s self.

We believe young Jews today need trusted and respected adult role models to guide and model the identity-building work that will enable them to contribute thoughtfully and productively to the Jewish and global communities. CJDS’s pluralistic approach to Jewish identity-building helps prepare students to navigate Jewish and secular life with confidence, cultural sensitivity,
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and passion. General Studies, Judaic Studies, and related-arts teachers meet several times a year to create meaningful projects for each grade that touch on every discipline and showcase multiple intelligences. Students leave CJDS understanding that the intersection of disciplines is not only engaging, but also reflective of the real world.

Our conscious, intentional, and thoughtful integration is evident in both everyday learning and regularly scheduled projects throughout the year. Central to CJDS’s curriculum are special events at which we have the opportunity to learn and celebrate together as a community. These include school-wide Shabbat and holiday programs, including assemblies led by each grade, second and third grade Hagigat Ha-Siddur and Hagigat Ha-Sefer ceremonies, our first grade animal research presentations, and the second grade State research fair, among others. Other highlights of our school year include trips to the local food pantry to deliver produce grown in our thriving garden, Special Friends Day, when we welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles and other members of our “Village” to experience CJDS with their students, and an annual butterfly release, at which we remember loved ones who are no longer with us.

Throughout all these activities, our tremendous faculty members guide students in answering each grade’s essential questions, integrating secular and Jewish learning, as well as social and emotional development, with our foundational Jewish values. We teach our students to work on, think about, and explore these complex questions in all of their academic and non-academic subjects of study in school and at home.

Our outdoor classrooms present unique opportunities for experiential education, including a perennial favorite: fishing in the pond and learning about our local ecosystem. Students have grown and sold vegetables and herbs and initiated other environmental initiatives such as terracycling and composting.

CJDS alumni live, study, and work all over the world. They attend top-tier colleges and universities, work in a wide array of industries, and continue to be influenced every day by the values of social responsibility and caring for their communities.

2. About the Position

The Head of School serves as the chief executive professional for the school community and the leader responsible for the supervision and guidance of our faculty, professional staff, and administration. They will be expected to oversee planning, program development and evaluation, advancement, finance and marketing while also serving as the public face of the institution and engaging in community relations. Recruitment is expected to be a top priority for the next 3-5 years. The Head of School will oversee and collaborate with our senior leadership team, which
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includes our Director of Recruitment and Dean of Academics, and our Director of Jewish Life and Learning. The Head of School will lead our outstanding faculty and oversee professional development.

CJDS’s faculty is singularly devoted to our mission. We have faculty who have served the school since its inception as well as profoundly talented early career professionals who will benefit from the Head of School’s educational experience and dedication to their professional development. The Head of School is responsible for preserving the deep-seated connection and relationships amongst the faculty while supporting their continuing education and growth, in close partnership with the senior leadership team.

During the 2022-23 academic year, the Board of Trustees empowered a group of committed lay leaders, both members of the school community and leaders in the broader Jewish and educational communities, to form a Sustainability Task Force (STF). The goal of the STF was to review the school’s current structure, financials, and board makeup and make a recommendation to the board for the health and longevity of the institution. That work was completed in May of 2023 and produced a detailed and lengthy report with eight recommendations. The Board voted to deploy these recommendations and the school has already begun implementing the recommended changes to ensure the school’s future health. The search committee looks forward to sharing that report with candidates who advance in the search process, and working with the selected Head of School to continue implementing these changes.

3. The Responsibilities of the Role

Governance/Board Relations
Report to the Board of Trustees, working closely with them to create and implement an effective strategic plan.
Serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee.
Work with the Board of Trustees and its committees to carry out school policies; attend meetings and keep trustees informed on aspects of the school’s operations.

Academic Leadership
Assess and evaluate the current leadership structure and implement improvements as necessary to enhance leadership at all levels.
In partnership with the Senior Leadership Team, steer and oversee the creation, implementation, and assessment of all educational programs, including general education, Judaic studies, physical education, related arts, and extracurricular programs.
Enrich, maintain, and articulate the school’s mission, vision, and values to the entire community.
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Empower faculty to ensure and support the success of all students with differentiated methods of instruction.

**Relationship Building**

Listen empathically to and manage parent concerns.
Show a high degree of emotional intelligence and the ability to relate to and communicate with a variety of stakeholders.
Build upon existing relationships and work to foster new relationships with donors.
Sustain and build upon existing relationships with stakeholders and partner agencies.

**Management**

Recruit, hire, and supervise faculty, staff, and administration; create mentorship and professional development opportunities for all employees.
Assist faculty and staff in interpreting the educational philosophy of the school and developing goals and objectives accordingly.
Lead a team of professionals and lay leaders responsible for development, marketing, recruitment, admissions, and administration.
Work closely with the Board of Trustees to generate sufficient revenue.
Oversee the budget process in close partnership with the Business Manager and lay leadership.

**Community relations**

Serve as a skilled spokesperson and advocate to articulate the vision and inspiring educational mission that CJDS offers the Jewish community and community at large.
Foster a presence in the Columbus Jewish community through engagement with other agencies.
Enhance all school relationships, including those with current and prospective parents, volunteers, the Jewish community, and secular educational partners, such as host public school districts.
Work with the Director of Recruitment and relevant committees to recruit new families and retain those currently enrolled.
Develop and manage a portfolio of major donors, and lead campaign efforts including events, appeals, individual donor cultivation and solicitation, and planned giving in support of the operating budget.
Represent the school at state and federal agencies, educational organizations, and accrediting agencies.
Maintain and advance a pluralistic, inclusive, and Jewish environment within the school, promoting the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at all levels.
4. Qualifications for the Position

Our next Head of School will:

Have a proven track record as an organizational leader and/or educational administrator, with school administrator and/or prior Head of School experience preferred.

Demonstrate familiarity and understanding of the intricacies of both Judaic and General Studies curricula.

Be prepared to quickly build strong, collaboration-focused relationships with the senior leadership team (Dean of Academics and Director of Recruitment, and Director of Jewish Life and Learning), and foster a positive supervisory relationship with the faculty and staff.

Have a demonstrated commitment to pluralistic Jewish education, social justice, and community stewardship.

Have proven management skills in the educational and/or nonprofit sector, with a record of achievement in advancement, recruitment/enrollment, and administration.

Have educational experience in the classroom at the elementary school level (preferred).

Be an organized, effective time manager.

Be skilled in written and oral communications.

Possess an inherent talent for relationship-building with a variety of internal and external constituents.

Be willing and eager to advocate for CJDS with partner Jewish agencies and explore positive working relationships, including but not limited to joint programming.

Be open to working with adults and children in a variety of academic, social, and professional settings and able to adapt and modify your approach accordingly.

Possess excellent interpersonal, political, and diplomatic leadership skills, and embrace a collaborative and team-centered management approach.

Have an excitement for learning and be a positive presence in and out of the classroom.

Genuinely enjoy spending time with young children, be inspired by their educational, social, and emotional development, and model this passion for others.

5. About the Community

Columbus is the largest city in Ohio and the 14th largest in the United States, with a population of more than 860,000 within a fast-growing metropolitan area of just over 2 million. Columbus is the state capital, and its proximity to major markets makes it a prime location for many businesses and institutions. Columbus has gained nationwide recognition for its historic neighborhoods, a top-notch food scene, booming downtown arts and sporting districts, open
attitude and affordable quality of life. The region is home to a number of Fortune 500 companies, high-quality colleges and universities, including The Ohio State University, and nationally ranked medical facilities including a Top 10 children’s hospital. Intel’s recent investment in a new manufacturing facility in New Albany is anticipated to bring even more growth to the city. The city is perfect for active lifestyles, having invested $20 million in a growing system of bike and fitness trails that connect the suburbs with the downtown's $44 million riverfront park system restoration. Museums, festivals, parks, live music, and theater are just some of the reasons Columbus is one of the best places in the nation to live, work, and raise a family. The city has been ranked at the top of the charts in many categories:

*America's Best Place to Raise Kids (Business Week)*
*Most Affordable Place to Retire (Forbes Magazine)*
*#1 Zoo and Aquarium (USA Tourist.com & USA Travel Guide)*
*Best Super Specialty Museum in the Nation for Children COSI (Child Magazine)*
*Top Arena in the Country for Stadium Experience-Nationwide Arena (ESPN magazine) #1*
*Library-Columbus Metropolitan Library (Library Journal)*
*Top Ten Most Livable City (CNN/Money Magazine)*
*Among America's Economically Strongest Metro Areas (Bloomberg Businessweek)*
*#1 Up & Coming High-Tech city (Forbes Magazine)*
*All-American City (National Civic League)*

The Jewish community in Columbus is growing too. The number of Jews living in central Ohio has increased from 22,000 living in 11,900 Jewish households a decade ago to 25,500 in 14,200 households now. Our community partners provide an active and vibrant Jewish life: two Jewish Day Schools, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus, Wexner Heritage Village, Jewish Family Services, OSU Hillel, and nine synagogues (3 Orthodox, 2 Conservative, 3 Reform, 1 Reconstructionist). The entire Jewish community has benefited from world-class Jewish leaders and philanthropic families. Home to the Wexner Foundation, Columbus is a significant seat of adult Jewish learning and Jewish leadership development for the entire Jewish world.

To apply to become our next Head of School, please send a cover letter and resume to Amy Wasser, Senior Director Field Advancement at Prizmah, Center for Jewish Day Schools amyw@prizmah.org.