

JEWISH CLEVELAND'S DAY SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION: FAQs

What is the Day School Transformation Campaign?

The Day School Transformation Campaign is an unprecedented \$180 million campaign to support five Cleveland Jewish Day Schools: Fuchs Mizrahi School, Gross Schechter Day School, Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School, and Yeshiva Derech Hatorah. The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Supporting Foundation has offered a dollar-for-dollar match on all gifts raised up to \$90 million which could result in total gifts of \$180 million. Of this amount, \$100 million will be used to increase the endowments of each participating school and the remaining \$80 million will go towards capital improvements needed at Fuchs Mizrahi School, Gross Schechter Day School, Hebrew Academy, and Yeshiva Derech Hatorah.

How will the funds raised in this campaign be used?

The Endowment Funds will be used to:

- Improve the caliber of education and innovation through smaller class sizes, new programmatic initiatives in Judaic and general studies as well as extracurriculars, and specialized programs such as STEM, fine arts, and internships
- Expand access to a wider range of students with different financial circumstances and learning needs, including both academic support and enrichment, through increased affordability, intervention, individual and small-group instruction, social-emotional learning, and mental health initiatives

- Recruit and retain the best teachers by providing competitive compensation packages and advanced professional development programs
- Attract and develop the strongest professional and lay leadership through strategic development initiatives and pipelines
- Create more ways to engage families in Jewish learning, deepen connections to Israel, and strengthen Hebrew education by bringing in additional shlichim (emissaries from Israel)

The Capital Funds will be used to:

- Build physical capacity to serve increasing numbers of students by acquiring new facilities and expanding buildings to add more classroom and communal spaces
- Renovate and upgrade facilities to create modern learning environments that provide appropriately designed spaces to enhance the academic experience
- Enhance access to educational excellence across all our day schools at the same time ensuring that every Jewish family in Cleveland has the opportunity to choose the school community that best represents their specific Jewish identity and goals for their children's future

What is an endowment and how will it support our schools?

An endowment is a type of fund created by nonprofits that helps ensure long-term financial stability. For most endowments, the money used to set up or add to the fund remains untouched and is invested into various assets. The organization then uses whatever investment income is earned from the assets. Endowments have policies that outline the annual spending limits and how the organization can use the funds and offer a consistent source of income for organizations to ensure stability and help with operating costs. If each school increases its endowment by \$20 million, it could add up to \$1 million to the school's operating budget annually.

Which schools are undergoing capital renovations?

At this time, Fuchs Mizrahi School and Gross Schechter Day School are actively planning capital improvements. Both Yeshiva Derech Hatorah and Hebrew Academy are in the initial stages of their capital plans as well. Mandel JDS recently completed a capital project.

How will my gift qualify for the match?

To qualify for the match, gifts must fall into one of the following categories:

- New cash gift: Donated or scheduled to be donated within a specific time frame
- New planned gift: Day School/Federation must be named as an irrevocable beneficiary of an asset with guaranteed minimum value (examples could include an IRA account, life insurance policy, percentage of an estate)

When will the schools receive the matching funds?

Upon the receipt of legally binding documentation that includes the guaranteed minimum value of the gift, the Mandel Supporting Foundation will advance the matching funds for that documented value.

How long will this campaign last?

The active fundraising period for this campaign will run through December 2026. The funds committed during this time will be realized over a period of many years.

Can I choose which schools to support?

There are five participating day schools – Fuchs Mizrahi School, Gross Schechter Day School, Hebrew Academy, Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School, and Yeshiva Derech Hatorah who are eligible for these funds. You may choose to support one, several, or all the participating schools.

I value and support Jewish education, but I don't want to choose between the schools, how do I participate?

Our hope is that everyone will want to participate in this groundbreaking initiative, whether they are personally connected to a school or not. The Federation is managing a community campaign for donors who do not wish to designate their gift to one school. These funds will support all our schools to ensure the success of this initiative.

Does this initiative support other Jewish education programs in Cleveland that are not part of the five day schools?

The Jewish Education Center of Cleveland (JEC) is the educational planning arm of our Jewish community and is nationally recognized for its work supporting Jewish education in all areas – from day schools and congregational schools to camps, Israel programming, adult education, and more. The JEC recently finished a comprehensive strategic plan to address the development of our education options in all streams. This Day School Transformation is one facet of this strategic plan. Our freestanding early childhood programs, synagogue schools, camps, and other educational programs all have related strategies for growth separate from this initiative.

If you are interested in learning more about these other programs, please contact Marlyn Bloch Jaffe, CEO of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, mjaffe@jecc.org.

I don't feel like I have the resources to make a large gift, will my gift still make a difference?

Every single gift will make a difference in this campaign, regardless of the amount. The broader the participation, the stronger impact this program will have on our schools for generations to come. Thanks to the Mandel Supporting Foundation, there are also unprecedented opportunities to make a planned gift that will be matched now, which can allow someone to make a meaningful contribution that might not be possible in the short term.

Is this initiative being replicated in other cities?

Cleveland was inspired by the Toronto Jewish community that launched a successful Day School Campaign several years ago. We believe our campaign will serve as a model for other communities as well. Prizmah (the network for Jewish Day Schools and Yeshivot in North America) has day school endowment initiatives as one of the pillars in its new strategic plan, and Cleveland is being recognized as a model and inspiration for other communities looking to launch communal endowment initiatives.

How will this campaign benefit the larger Cleveland Jewish community?

Supporting this initiative will elevate all of Jewish Cleveland. Since the announcement of this campaign, Cleveland has been receiving national attention for this groundbreaking investment in Jewish education. Providing outstanding and affordable Jewish day school options will also continue to attract more families to Cleveland. Additionally, Jewish day school education has been proven to lead to deep engagement with the Jewish community later in life, cultivating our next generation of donors, professionals, and lay leaders. The newest research published in January 2025 reports what a difference attending Jewish day school makes in the lives of young Jewish college students. Compared to peers who did not attend Jewish day school, Jewish day school alumni consistently report stronger ties to their Jewish identity, a deeper connection to Israel, and greater participation in Jewish life during their college years. By investing in our day schools today, we are cultivating tomorrow's leaders, both in Cleveland and the areas where those from Cleveland will move in future years.

How can I get more information about the capital improvements at each of the applicable schools?

Each school is working on its own capital plans. Here is the contact information for each school. Please feel free to reach out to the individual school with any questions.

Fuchs Mizrachi School:

Rabbi Avery Joel, Head of School
avjoel@fuchsmizrachi.org

Gross Schechter Day School:

Ginny Galili, Head of School
ggalili@grossschechter.org

Hebrew Academy:

Rabbi Eli Dessler, Financial Director
dessler@hac1.org

Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School:

Jay Leberman, Head of School
jleberman@mandeljds.org

Yeshiva Derech Hatorah:

Rabbi Sender Stoll, Executive Director
ssoll@ydtcleveland.org

How can I get more information about this incredible opportunity?

Both the schools and the Federation would love to share more about this exciting campaign. If you would like general information about the larger campaign or are interested in making a gift to support the Community fund, please contact Rachel Lappen, Senior Vice President/Chief Development Officer at the Federation – rlappen@jewishcleveland.org or 216-593-2841.

If you would like information about a particular school, please contact the staff below:

Fuchs Mizrachi School:

Shira Teller, Director of Development and Communications
steller@fuchsmizrachi.org, 216-932-0220 ext. 1512

Gross Schechter Day School:

Renee Greller, Director of Development
rgreller@grossschechter.org, 216-763-1400 ext. 419

Hebrew Academy:

Rabbi Eli Dessler, Financial Director
dessler@hac1.org, 216-382-3300 ext. 362

Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School:

Katie Foster, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement
kfoster@mandeljds.org, 216-464-4055 ext. 138

Yeshiva Derech Hatorah:

Rabbi Sender Stoll, Executive Director
ssoll@ydtcleveland.org, 216-382-6248 ext. 116



Jewish Federation
OF CLEVELAND
HERE FOR GOOD

FUCHS
MIZRACHI
SCHOOL

שכטר
GROSS SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL

בית חינוך הרב דסלר-קליבלנד
Hebrew Academy
of Cleveland

Joseph & Florence Mandel
Jewish Day School
בית הספר היהודי על שם ג'וסף ופלורנס מנדל

Yeshiva
DERECH
HATORAH
תפארת מנחם משה

Contact: Rachel Lappen, Senior Vice President/Chief Development Officer
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