JCDS, Boston’s Jewish Community Day School  
Watertown, MA  
Head of School  
for July 2020

JCDS, Boston’s Jewish Community Day School (www.jcbsboston.org) seeks a dynamic, inspirational, and entrepreneurial educational leader who is committed to the school’s pluralist mission, is energized to continuing to build upon the school’s already strong community, and is excited by the opportunity to lead JCDS. The school, located in Watertown, MA, a vibrant community in metropolitan Boston adjacent to Cambridge and Newton, serves students in Kindergarten through grade 8. Founded in 1995, JCDS has thrived as a strong community where students, parents and faculty find academic growth, intellectual stimulation, deep Jewish meaning and joy, and strong personal connections.

From an enrollment of 11 students in its inaugural year, the school’s projected enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is 152 students. As an independent, pluralist, co-educational Jewish day school, JCDS attracts students and families from many different cities and towns in the Boston area. Families span a wide spectrum of Jewish beliefs and practices: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, traditional, post-denominational, unaffiliated, interfaith, and secular. Historically, the school has been a particularly attractive choice for Jewish professionals and community leaders as they look for a school for their own children. Additionally, the school has a strong philosophic and financial commitment to economic diversity. The curriculum and school culture embrace and celebrate the diversity represented within the school’s community. Diversity at JCDS takes many forms. There are Americans and Israelis as well as socio-economic, racial, LGBTQ, and cultural diversity.

Intentional pluralism is the school’s most distinctive cultural element and its organizing principle. JCDS teaches that diversity of expression, belief, and practice is a strength of the school community and that interacting with these differences with dignity and respect leads to growth and development for all. Since pluralism is a principled philosophical stance rather than a pragmatic one, the school makes decisions across all areas, including the educational program along with the commitment to academic excellence in both general studies and Jewish learning, and admissions decisions to reflect this commitment. Hebrew and English are used throughout the day as languages of instruction and communication. Children learn to converse well in both languages and develop a strong cultural connection with Israel.

The recipient of many awards and grants for innovation in the teaching of Hebrew and pluralism, JCDS has been selected to pilot numerous new programs focused on student learning.
and professional development; staff and lay leadership are often invited to present at such conferences as the Jewish Day school national conference. JCDS has earned an international reputation as a model for best practices and cutting-edge pluralistic education. Pluralism is integrated throughout the curriculum at JCDS. Examples include T’fillah Electives, Interfaith Curriculum Initiative (coordinate programs with the German International School and Malik Academy), Chevruta Work, Understanding Our Differences, Mikveh Learning Adventure, and Pre-Shavuot Pluralism Panel.

Mission, Vision and Values
The mission of JCDS, Boston’s Jewish Community Day School, is to provide a premier education that:

- Nurtures each student's capacity for intellectual discovery and decision-making within a respectful, pluralist, bilingual Hebrew-English environment.
- Gives our graduates the ability to create their futures informed by Jewish values, texts and culture, and to make a difference in their communities and in the world.
- Kindles the flame of lifelong learning in all its constituencies and serves as an inspirational model of innovative, effective and joyful teaching and learning beyond the school.

What We Believe
- The K-8 years build an enduring foundation: intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Our outstanding educational program combines academic excellence with character and spiritual development:
  - Strong skills and deep knowledge, matched with a sense of awe and wonder, foster a humble confidence: our students are both capable and deeply curious, they know themselves, and they become adults who do not rush to judgment.
  - Our small, warm community offers a welcoming home where each person is known: we nurture and challenge each child, cherish each family, appreciate each donor, and strive to engage our community to the fullest.
  - Each of us, at every age, can solve problems and take action to make the world healthier and more just.
  - Joyful Jewish living and learning uniquely connect the individual and our world, providing lifelong opportunities to engage with meaning, community, ethics, knowledge, responsibility, and the divine.
  - Hebrew and intentional pluralism together shape our worldview and form our shared languages – literal and figurative – for integrating Jewish identity, critical thinking, character formation, and intellectual development throughout the curriculum and our lives.
  - Intentional Pluralism gives us the tools to engage across difference, fostering strong identity, cultivating curiosity and empathy, and building self-awareness and reflection.
• Integrating Hebrew and English throughout the day sparks growth, creates personal connections to Jewish texts and the State of Israel, and maximizes the brain flexibility benefits of second language acquisition.

School Structure, Governance and Facilities
Sitting on 8 acres of land, the majority of which are not yet developed, JCDS owns a well-outfitted school building. Their acreage affords the school the potential of facilities improvement and enhancement. There is a campus master plan, which has not been fully implemented but could guide future improvements. JCDS is a place that encourages parental involvement and has a committed and hard-working Board along with a talented and dedicated faculty, many who characterize JCDS as a second home. The new Head of School will inherit a strong school community, with many invested stakeholders who are eager and ready to continue its robust educational programs.

The interior of the school building is a bright, welcoming space that is enhanced by colorful and plentiful student art, a clear visual representation of this school’s vibrancy. The school’s learning and teaching spaces are designed to enable learning to take place in a variety of modalities that promote the school’s mission. The building includes two dedicated science rooms and a dedicated art room, "Just Right" libraries in every classroom, a multi-purpose room, a small gym and Lower and Middle School learning centers, Beit Knesset for prayer and celebrations, and Beit Midrash for text and group study. Outdoor play facilities (including a basketball court, playground, and soccer field) will be receiving an upgrade during the summer.

In Kindergarten through Grade Four, there is one section per grade level with 18-22 students in each classroom. Each class is taught by a two-teacher team, one of whom is a native Hebrew speaker. This approach enables integration of general, Jewish, and Hebrew language studies throughout each school day. Students have the benefit of learning Hebrew through formal instruction as well as informally by hearing the language spoken throughout the school. The 5th Grade program is designed to transition students from the lower school program to middle school where students move between subject specialists.

As a progressive school, at the core of JCDS’s educational approach are commitments to engaging the whole child, to using project-based learning and to cultivating the JCDS Habits of Mind and Heart (which find expression across all grades and subject areas and guide participation in the community). From a play-based Kindergarten to Thinking Like an Engineer throughout the school, JCDS is committed to effective practices in lower and middle school education. More complete descriptions of these programs are available on the school’s website.

The After School Program provides an opportunity for JCDS students to be creative, engage in productive interests, and have fun. A wide variety of activities, including art, games, and gym time are available for students, as well as more structured hands-on enrichment classes in crafts, robotics, strategy games, and private music lessons. Middle school students also have
the opportunity to participate in both academic and athletic teams and competitions. Options include speech, math, robotics, basketball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, and crew.

In addition to 53 current full and part-time faculty, the professional staff includes an Assistant Head of School, Principal, Director of Learning & Teaching, Director of Jewish Studies & Hebrew Director, Director of Development & Communications, and Director of Finance & Operations.

The Board of Trustees is composed of 21 individuals including current and former parents and alumni as well as a number of outside community members. The Board operates with an Executive Committee and has a well-defined committee structure. It understands and adheres to best practices for school governance. The school has an annual budget of $4.3M. Again this year, annual giving brought in over $1M, with participation from 94% of parents and 100% of trustees. Approximately 20% of the annual budget comes from the school’s philanthropic efforts and just over 50% of the students receive financial assistance.

JCDS is a member of Prizmah and NAIS, and is accredited by AISNE.

Opportunities
Like many independent schools that serve younger students, JCDS has experienced fluctuating enrollment over the last decade. A number of factors have contributed to this, including declining numbers of school-aged children and growing competition from very strong area public schools. With approximately 150 students enrolled, there are opportunities for enrollment growth as the school’s capacity would enable a student population of 175. While the school is known in the greater Jewish community for its commitment to pluralism and to progressive education, there is also a sense that increased marketing and outreach would have a positive effect on admissions. JCDS needs to continually demonstrate value and purpose, and JCDS’s Head of School needs to be very engaged in admissions and retention efforts. A new Head of School will need to be excited about serving as an enthusiastic ambassador, serving as an inspiring spokesperson, and collaborating with other JCDS stakeholders on outreach efforts.

As the school transitions to new leadership, a Head of School who can bring authentic enthusiasm to ensuring a strong internal community will be appreciated. Strengthening opportunities for faculty, particularly between and among the lower and middle school, to connect both professionally and personally to nurture JCDS’s positive professional culture will be important. A visible, active, and personable Head of School will further energize the internal, positive community.

Under the leadership of the Director of Learning & Teaching, JCDS is engaged in examining the curriculum to ensure scope, sequence, and intentionality, and further focus on this endeavor will continue in the early years of a new Head’s tenure. A Head of School who is not only well-versed in pedagogical best practices, but can also articulate and demonstrate that a great school can be both academically and “Jewishly” dynamic, and wonderfully nurturing, will serve JCDS well. The professional community will respond well to knowledgeable, respectful, and inspirational leadership. Thus, a leader who is collaborative, respectful, and understands how to
facilitate inclusive, professional conversations to generate shared vision and goals, will be a successful leader at the school.

In addition to fostering JCDS’ position as a national leader in Intentional Pluralism, financial sustainability, including a robust and balanced budget, which enables appropriate student financial assistance, will be among the most pressing priorities for JCDS. A new Head of School will need to work with other senior administrators, Board members, and perhaps others in the Greater Boston Jewish educational community in planning ahead on numerous fronts for ongoing financial sustainability. There is a very strong Jewish educational community in the Boston area, which may provide opportunities for leadership and collaboration.

A leader who understands the importance of intentional and consistent communication will be appreciated. As a new Head builds relationships throughout the school community, both internally and externally, developing shared and respectful communication protocols will provide increased transparency and opportunities for parents and faculty to plan ahead with efficiency.

JCDS has engaged stakeholders in philanthropically supporting the school through annual giving, capital giving, other campus-wide events as well as more individual cultivation. As a key ingredient in achieving financial sustainability, there is an ongoing need to focus on development efforts. A Head of School who has the experience and comfort with articulating the values of a school’s program and the opportunities for donors to invest to ensure sustainability will be a good match for JCDS’s future. In partnership with members of the Board of Trustees and the Director of Development, the next Head of School will be a leading voice in furthering the school’s efforts in this arena.

As a new Head of School joins the school community and partners with others in addressing the above challenges and opportunities, ensuring a preservation of the school’s current strengths and unique culture will be essential. The successful candidate will:

- Inspire and mobilize the energies of the many individuals pledged to JCDS's success. This person must effectively work with the school’s existing foundation of dedicated individuals who possess an informed entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to the establishment of a strong pluralist Jewish day school.
- Consider and establish the optimal faculty staffing and administrative structure, including salary and benefits, for JCDS’s current and future needs. This needs to move forward in conjunction with a commitment to establishing appropriate and instituted evaluation and supervision systems.

The Next Head of School
JCDS is at an important juncture in its history, and future growth and success will in large part depend on a great next Head of School working proactively in conjunction with other stakeholders, including faculty, staff, board of trustees and community members. The school is seeking an ambitious, energetic, and confident leader who will passionately embrace the
school’s mission, core values, school community and collaborative culture and who is excited by the opportunity.

Leading JCDS is a great opportunity for a highly intelligent and relationship-minded school leader. The school’s size allows one to balance the needs of the internal community while also tackling the external challenges. The next Head of School needs to be an individual who is enthusiastic about and committed to the school’s pluralistic Jewish mission and foundation.

JCDS’s next Head of School will:

- Be honest, respectful, trustworthy and a person of impeccable integrity who values serving as a role model as a leader, an educator, and a Jew
- Be a coalition and team builder who is a listener and a facilitator but also a decision-maker
- Be a visionary and strategic thinker who is bold, creative, intelligent, and in possession of a clear educational vision and the abilities to articulate and implement that vision
- Be articulate, effective, and confident as a communicator.
- Be comfortable engaging with a highly educated parent community, many of whom are educators, non-profit professionals, and entrepreneurs
- Have facility with Jewish ethos and tradition, understand and be committed to pluralism, and ideally, be proficient in Hebrew
- Come with a proven and successful track record of success
- Be authentically respectful and embracing of the individual practices and perspectives represented within the pluralist school and the larger Jewish community
- Be comfortable in leading and engaging in discussions that explore and enhance JCDS’s commitment to being a vibrant, intentional pluralist community

This is an outstanding opportunity for an experienced, energetic school professional to build on and enhance a school in possession of a clear and compelling mission. The ideal candidate will be a Jewish educational professional who is inspirational, dynamic, and a team builder. JCDS’s next Head of School will be a thoughtful risk taker, a fundraiser, a diplomat, and a true mensch.

**For Consideration**

Please forward electronically a resume, letter of interest and a personal statement and/or statement of educational philosophy to:

Jane Armstrong and/or Bill Lyons

*Independent Thinking*

search@independent-thinking.com

617.332.3131

*All inquiries will be treated confidentially.*

*JCDS is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees without regard to race, color, religious creed, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical disability.*