

POSITION STATEMENT

San Diego Jewish Academy

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA



LEADERSHIP SEARCH

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 1, 2027



A Leadership Search conducted by **RG175 Search Consultants Jerry Katz and Steve Morris**

SDJA

Overview

San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA) is a vibrant, pluralistic Jewish day school serving students from early childhood through grade 12 on a beautiful, 56-acre campus in San Diego, CA.

SDJA serves families from across the Jewish spectrum and offers a rigorous academic program designed to challenge and support students at every stage of their development. Small class sizes, close faculty student relationships, and innovative instructional practices foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and resilience. Jewish studies, Hebrew language, and experiential learning are integrated throughout the curriculum, ensuring that students graduate with both strong academic preparation and a confident, thoughtful Jewish identity.

This is an exceptional school and a very special school leadership opportunity. Current Head of School, Zvi Weiss, will be retiring at the end of the 2026-27 academic year, and the new Head will assume responsibility on July 1, 2027. SDJA's next Head of School will be a visionary educator, an inspiring community builder, and a financially astute executive who understands that lasting educational excellence requires both bold innovation and disciplined stewardship.

SDJA

At-A-Glance

Founded: 1979

2026-27 Enrollment: 575

Financial Aid: 60% of students

Employees: 137

Operating Budget: \$19.6M

Annual Fundraising: \$2M

Endowment: \$10M + Pledges of \$25M

Location: 56-acre, debt-free campus



SDJA'S

Mission

SDJA's mission is *"to empower each student to learn for life, guided by Jewish values and rooted in strength of community."*

SDJA'S

Core Values

SDJA graduates embody meaningful, informed, and personal connections to Judaism, Israel, and the Jewish people. They thoughtfully approach opportunities and challenges with curiosity to ask questions, a passion to learn, and the confidence to implement solutions. They create and maintain lifelong relationships that add meaning to their lives, allowing them to support each other, connect, and engage deeply in community and society. The core values instilled in SDJA students are:

- **KLAL YISRAEL:** Connectedness to one another, to family, and to the people of Israel
- **MENSCHLICHKEIT:** *Acting in a fair and just manner and being compassionate towards other people*
- **TZEDAKAH:** Acts of kindness and righteousness towards our fellow human beings
- **ISRAEL:** The strong belief in Israel as both a homeland and a State for the Jewish people

- **TORAH:** Study that reflects Jewish values, history, and beliefs

- **AVODAH:** Prayer and other ritual mitzvot that connect us with our spirituality and God

SDJA'S

History

San Diego Jewish Academy was established as the first non-Orthodox K-5 Jewish day school in San Diego in 1979. As the Jewish community began to grow and shift northward, a second K-8 campus was opened ten years later in La Jolla. In 1998, the school leadership committed to the consolidation of the two campuses and the creation of the first Jewish high school in the county, all to be on one site. In 2001, thanks to visionary leadership and a heroic fundraising effort, SDJA was able to move into a new, modern school serving ECC-12 students on a 56-acre hillside campus in the North Coastal community of Carmel Valley.

From its earliest inception, SDJA was conceived as a pluralistic Jewish school, one in which all streams of Jewish practice and belief would find a home, and a place where all would learn both Jewish and secular subjects with equal rigor and engagement.

Throughout its history, the School has benefited from remarkable community leadership, characterized by extraordinary passion, commitment, resilience, determination, and generosity—resulting in a school with vast opportunity.

OUR CAMPUS

Location & Facilities

SDJA's 56-acre campus, bordered by open space and overlooking the Pacific Ocean, provides a striking and inspiring setting for learning and community life. State-of-the-art academic facilities, athletic fields, performance spaces, and outdoor learning environments reinforce the School's commitment to innovation, creativity, and connection.

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Program

SDJA presents itself as four schools on one campus connected as one community.

- SDJA's Preschool, the Early Childhood Center nurtures curiosity, joy, and a love of learning. Here, children develop socially, emotionally, and academically as they grow into who they are meant to be, rooted in Jewish values and strengthened by a warm, supportive community.
- At Golda Meir Lower School, every student is seen as an individual. Through personalized academics, positive nurturing relationships, and an integrated curriculum, SDJA provides opportunities for students to challenge their strengths, explore their unique interests, and develop a lifelong passion for learning.



- SDJA's Middle School guides students to hone their curiosity, discover their strengths, develop independence, and grow into confident learners. SDJA Middle School students develop the academic and social-emotional skills needed for future academic success within a safe environment where they are supported in taking positive risks during this critical intellectual and social phase of their development.
- At Maimonides Upper School, academic excellence and Jewish values create a unique and enriching high school experience. As a vibrant and inclusive community, faculty take pride in nurturing each student's intellectual, spiritual, and personal growth. Here, tradition and innovation intertwine, empowering students to embark on a journey of discovery to understand their passions.

More information about the academic, athletic, arts, and Jewish education programs at SDJA is available at: <https://www.sdja.com>



PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The School Community

Faculty and Staff

The SDJA teaching faculty is comprised of talented professionals who are dedicated to the School's mission and model a strong work ethic while delivering a challenging curriculum to students. SDJA prides itself on its strong sense of community and values diversity of thought, perspective and experience in creating a collaborative working environment for its faculty and staff.

Administration

The Head of School works with a senior leadership team that includes a Chief Financial Officer, Director of Operations, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management, Director of Marketing and Communications, Director of Advancement, Director of Jewish Education, Director of Early Childhood, Head of Lower School, Middle School Principal, and Head of Upper School. In addition, there is an Executive Assistant to the Head of School.

Families

At SDJA, there is a shared belief that authentic home-and-school partnerships are the surest path to maximizing each child's potential. A broad range of families includes recent immigrant groups proud of their roots in Mexico, South Africa, and Israel. Furthermore, 25% of current students are children of SDJA alumni. SDJA is a tight-knit community, united by shared values, but truly pluralistic in both life experience and orientation towards Jewish beliefs and practices.

Board of Trustees

The Board's responsibility is to ensure the long-term success of SDJA as an institution. Its primary activities include monitoring the School's financial management, fundraising, strategic planning, setting high-level policies, ensuring that the School has adequate physical resources, and the hiring, support, and evaluation of the Head of School. SDJA's Board consists of current parents, past parents, alumni, and members of the broader Jewish community.

WHAT'S WORKING & WHAT'S NEXT

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

SDJA has a clear, meaningful identity as a warm, proudly Jewish community dedicated to nurturing the whole child. Among the school's many strengths are its compelling mission and values, rigorous academic program, dedicated and talented faculty and senior leadership team, state-of-the-art facilities, desirable location, and strong sense of community.

There is a widespread perception that SDJA stands at an important moment in its history. While the School has many strengths, the next Head will inherit a school that has experienced recent enrollment decline, affordability concerns, and organizational complexity. While economic and enrollment recovery plans have been put into place and are already resulting in increased financial stability and enrollment stabilization, the School has experienced an erosion of confidence that also needs to be addressed.

While there are both dilemmas to be managed and problems to be solved, none is unique to SDJA, and many are experienced by other pluralistic Jewish day schools and secular independent schools in the U.S. today. The following are key challenges and opportunities to be addressed by the next Head of School:



Managing the Dilemmas of Enrollment and Affordability

In an educational landscape that includes very good public schools and a number of highly regarded secular independent schools, SDJA needs an aggressive plan to attract new students and retain current students, while striving to ensure that a Jewish education remains accessible to a broad range of area families. Affordability is a central obstacle to achieving this aspiration. Over the course of the years ahead, the school will need to take tangible steps to ensure that SDJA is seen as both rigorous and competitive with other independent schools, while remaining accessible to a broad range of Jewish families throughout San Diego.

Continuing to Attract and Retain Outstanding Faculty

SDJA's faculty are deeply committed to their students and the school's mission; however, annual adjustments to their compensation have not kept up with increases in the cost of living. While striving to remain accessible, the school must continue to prioritize securing the necessary resources needed to attract and retain outstanding teachers in an increasingly competitive hiring environment.

Leading a Strong Pluralistic Community

SDJA is enriched by engaged, thoughtful, and varied voices. An important opportunity for the school is to honor and draw strength from this diversity of perspectives, while also providing clear, confident leadership around its values, expectations, and priorities.



Improving Communication

In a school with four schools, clear, consistent communication and visible follow-through are essential to strengthening relationships and fostering a connected community. As SDJA navigates an increasingly complex information environment, the school must communicate openly and honestly, follow through visibly, and ensure that faculty, students, and families feel informed, connected, and confident in its direction.

Strengthening Governance

Strong governance depends on a collaborative and effective partnership between the Board and the Head of School. SDJA's Board and its next Head will need to work closely with one another to advance a shared strategic vision and to sustain focus on the school's highest priorities, while also maintaining the boundaries associated with their respective roles.

SDJA

The Position

The next Head of San Diego Jewish Academy will have the opportunity to lead a purpose-driven independent school to a new level of educational excellence. The Head of School at SDJA oversees ongoing operations, hires and supports its employees, and manages its annual budget. The next Head's initial annual base salary will be commensurate with compensation at similar California independent schools and will be between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

SDJA's Jewish identity and core values are foundational and must be embraced by the next Head of School.

Beyond this overarching priority, SDJA seeks a mission-driven institution-builder—a leader committed to Jewish purpose, disciplined in enrollment management and finance, generous in presence and communication, and credible both as a fundraiser and as a builder of confidence and trust.

The Search Committee will be looking for candidates who demonstrate many of the following traits:

- **Educational Visionary and Student-Centered:** SDJA seeks a leader with a compelling educational vision who demonstrates the ability to both inspire and to get things done, while keeping students and learning at the center of decision-making.
- **Financially and Operationally Attentive:** The next Head does not need to be the expert in every functional area, but must understand the entire school enterprise, hire strong people, ask the right questions, and remain appropriately engaged in all aspects of the organization.
- **Relational, Visible, and Accessible:** SDJA seeks a leader who embraces the joys of being an engaged presence on campus—warm, empathetic, approachable, and available to students, faculty, staff, and parents.



- **A Willing Fundraiser:** The next Head should be able to embrace their role in cultivating relationships with prospective donors and soliciting philanthropic support for the strategic needs of the School.
- **Decisive and Execution-Oriented:** SDJA seeks a leader who listens carefully and collaboratively, but ultimately makes decisions, establishes priorities, and delivers results, moving the School from reactive management toward proactive planning and disciplined execution.
- **A Strong Team and Culture Builder:** The next Head should know how to identify, hire, develop, and retain excellent people and then provide them with both appropriate autonomy, accountability, and support.
- **An Excellent Communicator:** SDJA seeks a leader who is an excellent communicator, both orally and in writing, who listens to understand and builds strong connections both within and outside the school community.
- **A Steady Leader Through Complexity:** The next Head should be a steady leader who can navigate institutional complexity with sound judgment and exceptional emotional intelligence—remaining calm under pressure, approaching difficult conversations with confidence, and providing clarity, stability, and reassurance during periods of challenge or change.





NEXT STEPS

Application Process

San Diego Jewish Academy has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. To apply, interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, a current resume, and a personal statement. Candidates are requested to submit these materials online at:

www.rg175.com/login

For an initial confidential inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact RG175 consultants:

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Application Deadline: November 1, 2026
Start Date: July 1, 2027