

JACK M. BARRACK HEBREW ACADEMY STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2029



JACK M.
BARRACK
HEBREW ACADEMY
Love where you learn

MISSION STATEMENT

Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy is a pluralistic Jewish day school for students in grades six through twelve from a broad variety of backgrounds. The school integrates a comprehensive and rigorous college preparatory curriculum with the teaching of essential Jewish and American values and texts. Barrack graduates value diversity, celebrate the richness of Judaism's language, culture, and history, and have a strong connection to Israel. Barrack prepares future leaders of the American, Jewish, and global communities who work for a better world through acts of justice and compassion.



CORE VALUES

HONOR
כבוד
KAVOD

COURAGE
אומץ לב
OMETZ LEV

KINDNESS
חסד
HESED

COMMUNITY
קהילה
KEHILLAH



August 2024

Over the past year, we engaged in a process to develop a strategic plan that will guide our work as a community for the next 3-5 years. We believed it was the right moment to undertake a fresh, in-depth exploration into our goals, priorities, and purpose with an eye toward strengthening our school—and the experiences of our Barrack community—for generations to come.

We remain committed to our core mission of offering an unmatched rigorous academic program infused with Jewish values and learning that enables students to become critical thinkers, confident and compassionate leaders, and thoughtful changemakers across Jewish and global communities. With its commitment to the education and development of the whole person, Barrack cultivates students' individuality along with a strong connection to their Jewish identity and sense of communal purpose within a diverse and supportive environment.

We put forth this new Strategic Plan with a deep appreciation for Barrack's rich 78-year history and the profound contribution of a klal Yisrael community day school to the continuity, strength, and growth of the Jewish community as a whole. The Plan distills our vision into five key pillars: Community, Leadership, Enrollment, Financial Strength, and Student Experience and includes critical strategies and action plan items to achieve our stated goals.

This was an intentional and collaborative process. We enlisted an outside consultant, engaged a task force and working groups composed of Board members, community professionals, staff, and stakeholders, and conducted interviews and strategic analyses to reflect the wide range of perspectives and priorities among our varied constituents. Guided by our shared values and vision, the resulting Strategic Plan serves as an adaptable, aspirational road map for the future that will reflect and respond to the changing needs of the school and the world around us.

With thanks to all who have informed, inspired, and enriched this process, we invite you to read our Strategic Plan and partner with us as we welcome and work together towards Barrack's continued role as a source of enlightenment, meaning, and connection for our entire community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marshall Lesack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Rabbi Marshall Lesack '97
Head of School
Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy

STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCE

Yoella Epstein
Scott Erlbaum
Noa Hedaya

Rena Kopelman
Charles Korman
Lisa Sandler

Marc Singer
Rabbi Mike Uram
Jonathan Zabusky
Rabbi Marshall Lesack

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Alex Stroker
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STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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Rena Kopelman
Rabbi Judd Kruger Levingston
Rebecca Trajtenberg
Rabbi Marshall Lesack

VISION

FOR JACK M. BARRACK
HEBREW ACADEMY

STRATEGIC PLAN



Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy offers an unmatched rigorous academic program infused with Jewish values and learning that enhances its students' critical thinking skills and character, preparing them to be strong, kind, and confident young adults ready to lead in a complex and ever-changing world. As a klal Yisrael, Jewish community day school, Barrack offers an inspired and transformative educational environment coupled with the values and tradition of our supportive community. Barrack students exemplify a dedication to lifelong learning, personal growth, self-reliance, humility, and a commitment to others, guided by Jewish values and a moral vision for our world.

VISION

FOR JACK M. BARRACK
HEBREW ACADEMY

STRATEGIC PLAN

Educational Approach

At Barrack, we value and respect our students and the student experience. We understand the significance of maintaining a balance between our students' secular academic experience, their Jewish journey, and their overall social-emotional well-being on the road to personal growth. Our unique model pushes our students to high levels of academic success, college preparedness, and leadership as they embark upon adulthood. Benefiting from a rich liberal arts curriculum, Jewish learning, individual attention, and an array of electives and extra-curriculars, students develop their analytical and critical thinking skills across disciplines while enjoying student agency and exploration through participation in innovative programs connected to their interests, passions, and goals.

Student Wellness

Barrack students blossom and mature both as learners and as people, supported by a team of educators and mentors committed to the development of the whole person. Cognizant of the challenges of adolescence and emerging adulthood within today's world, our focus on and attention to the social-emotional well-being of all of our students is paramount. We strive to create a school in which every student is known, seen, heard, and valued for their individuality and potential. By educating the whole child, Barrack inspires its students to be mensches, young people who are thoughtful, well-rounded, kind, and caring.

Jewish Knowledge, Belonging, and Connection

The Barrack community models the idea of Jewish peoplehood and celebrates the richness and diversity of the Jewish community in Philadelphia and its surrounding areas. We strive to create an inclusive and warm environment that supports students of various Jewish practices and backgrounds engaged in the daily study of Jewish texts and ideas. Guided by our Derech Eretz values of community, kindness, honor, and moral courage, students are empowered to ask questions and engage in conversation, collaboration, and respectful disagreement on their Jewish journeys. As a Zionist Jewish day school, our students learn Hebrew, participate in immersive trips and Jewish experiences, and forge a deep and strong connection to the land, the people, and the State of Israel.

Beyond Barrack

Barrack students graduate as knowledgeable and proud Jewish young adults, engaging with the world from a standpoint of an informed and confident Jewish identity. Our alumni possess the skills and perspectives to actively and impactfully participate in the larger community. Harnessing the power of a Barrack education and the lifelong friendships developed during these formative years, Barrack alumni model the best of Jewish and American values while making their own unique contributions to their community and the broader world.

STRATEGIC PLAN: PROCESS

1 PREPARATION PHASE

January 2023:

- Engaged Evolve Giving Group to support the development of our strategic plan.

2 DISCOVERY PHASE

Winter 2023 - Spring 2023:

- Evolve Giving Group performed an environmental scan of comparable Jewish day schools as well as market analysis interviews, including speaking to current and former parents, alumni, donors, and other community members. Findings were summarized in a report shared with the Strategic Planning Task Force.

3 PLANNING PHASE

Board Retreat May 2023

Summer 2023 - Winter 2024:

- The Strategic Planning Task Force identified the five pillars of the strategic plan - Community, Leadership, Enrollment, Financial Strength, and Student Experience.
- Evolve Giving Group partnered with working groups for each pillar area. Each working group included members of the Board, staff, and community.
- Each working group prioritized outcomes with the most critical strategies to progress in each pillar area.

4 APPROVAL PHASE

- Final draft was approved by the Board of Directors March 14, 2024.



PILLAR 1: **COMMUNITY**



STRATEGIES:

- Improve internal community-building practices to engage current families, alumni, and alumni families
- Increase external community partnerships to bring Barrack to the broader community and to bring the broader community to campus
- Strengthen the PreK-12th grade Jewish community day school system in collaboration with our partners

PILLAR 2: **LEADERSHIP**



STRATEGIES:

- Expand the lay leadership pipeline and develop an effective succession plan
- Develop, train, and retain leaders
- Evaluate and improve governance structure





PILLAR 3: **ENROLLMENT**

STRATEGIES:

- Understand/define the benefits of a Barrack Jewish day school education to actionable market segments
- Refine and customize brand identity/ies to broaden appeal
- Determine ideal model/s for tuition and assistance levels to incentivize enrollment and retention among target audiences
- Strengthen partnership with and conversion rate from Perelman Jewish Day School while simultaneously expanding the reach of Barrack into other markets and feeders and new to day school enrollment
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of candidate/prospective family pipeline management and information systems
- Reassess admissions staffing model, headcount, and related personnel to achieve enrollment goals
- Strengthen the PreK-12th grade Jewish community day school system in collaboration with our partners



PILLAR 4: **FINANCIAL STRENGTH**

STRATEGIES:

- Determine 5-year financial forecast as a baseline for establishing financial goals and informing the other financial strategies
- Determine ideal models for tuition and assistance levels
- Strengthen the culture of philanthropy
- Implement campus purchase and expenditure plan
- Assess possible improvements to financial model
- Strengthen the PreK-12th grade Jewish community day school system in collaboration with our partners





PILLAR 5:
**STUDENT
EXPERIENCE**

STRATEGIES:

- Advance the evolution of the academic program
- Increase student agency throughout the academic program (and beyond) to nurture student growth, interests, and passions
- Enhance focus on and proactively develop a strong social-emotional environment for students
- Elevate the experience of Jewish life and Israel engagement
- Elevate the experience of student life and co-curricular programming
- Invest in professional development and teacher growth



SOME ACTION STEPS IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Create updated structure for parent involvement which includes new model and clarity of purpose for PTO and Parent Ambassador groups
- Assess current community partnerships and devise a broader plan for intentional partnering with local/national/international organizations
- Establish a system of intentional recruitment to populate the Board so that it represents the demographics of the Barrack community and supports the specific needs of the Board
- Work towards total enrollment of 375-400 students over the next 3-5 years, including possible investments in increased space and staffing
- Increase community-based programs for families of all ages to increase touch points with Barrack
- Assess stewardship of current donors while strategically cultivating new donor relationships
- Secure additional funding to support and offset the cost of 8th grade and 11th grade Israel programs
- Review and/or establish appropriate systems and standards among divisions and departments with respect to grading policies, homework, use of Learning Management Systems and other academic-related items of importance, while maintaining room for flexibility and individuality for faculty
- Utilize current research to create more opportunity for alternative means of assessment to give students choice in how to demonstrate their learning
- Evaluate our ability to address or coordinate mental health and related services at school to better address student needs
- Ensure consistent staffing and offerings for an Art/Drama/Music program
- Determine how investment in and focus on faculty wellness and support impact teacher growth, faculty culture, and retention

