SJCS | Seattle Jewish Community School

2025-2026/5786 Impact Report

"I love SJCS.
The friends.
The teachers.
The choices we get to make.
The community."
Naomi,
SJCS Class of 2027





A Year of Community

Thank you for partnering with us to make Seattle Jewish Community School's (SJCS) mission and vision a reality. During the 2025–2026/5786 school year, our focus was *Kadima! B'Kehillah*/קדימה! בקהילה (Onward! In Community).

Building on all that the school has achieved in recent years—with the support and engagement of our community—we set out to aspire more, reach higher, and move forward, setting strong foundations to prepare our students to live lives of meaning and purpose in Jewish community.







Please join us in reflecting upon the last year at SJCS, with gratitude to donors like you for making it possible.

Onward! In SJCS Community

- A special *Sukkot*/סוכות event for SJCS alumni featured Andrea Soroko Naar, Executive Director of Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW, and focused on efforts to support detainees in our region.

- SJCS parent Brooke Pinkham, Staff Director of the Northwest Center for Indigenous Law at Seattle University, joined our combined celebration of *Hoshannah Rabbah*/הושענה רבה and Indigenous Peoples Day, and shared from her tribe's traditions and stories.

- The Parents Association initiated and hosted a joyful *Chanukah*/חנוכה celebration that brought students, families, and staff together, creating a special space for connection and unity.

- When the Seahawks won the Super Bowl, we honored our place-based values and Seattle pride with our own parade, complete with blue and green pompoms and "Super Bowl Ring" pops provided by the Parents Association.

"Our twins' teacher continuously centered their needs and used years of experience, a community-centered classroom, and mindfulness to help them grow and become themselves. We are glad that they were at such a supportive school during this pivotal time in their lives."
– Alicia and Hannah Oshlag, SJCS Parents



- In honor of *Shavuot*/שבועות, we collected fruit, then paraded with fruit baskets on our shoulders and while *Morah* Beth Schustek and *Morah* Debbie Clement played *Saleinu Al K'teifeinu*/סלינו על כתפינו (Our Baskets Are on Our Shoulders), a classic Israeli folk song. Then we donated the fruit to a food bank.

- The Parents Association hosted the Celebration of Pluralism to share traditions and cultures represented by the SJCS community. Children assembled a community quilt and families contributed dishes to a potluck meal that reflected their own traditions.

- Our new SJCS Performing Arts Specialist, Molly Goldman, provided weekly drama lessons and activities to our students and enhanced holiday performances and other special events throughout the year.

- Director of Community Engagement Theresa Glatstein, Board Development Chair Ilana Wodlinger, and Head of School David Zimand participated in the Endowment Training Institute, sponsored by the national umbrella organization Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools.



- We initiated special *m'AL u'm'EVER* stipends for employees who take on "above and beyond" projects, including home visits with incoming kindergarteners, a new mural on the shed, and an online independent work program for Hebrew enrichment.

- Administrators, parents, a grandparent, and Laurie Mendelson (wife of Head of School David Zimand) planned and led elective courses on topics of interest to the students, including visual arts, exploration of nature, physical activities, and introductions to Spanish and Arabic.



- We completed the final stages of our Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS) Self-Study and Visit process and earned full re-accreditation.

- Director of Advancement Ross Diamond led tours of SJCS for all Board members, giving them an opportunity to take in "delivery on mission" in action.

- Throughout the year, SJCS welcomed more than 45 prospective family inquiries, hosted 27 personalized admissions tours, and welcomed 13 families to our Open House.

Onward! In Seattle Community

We launched the ***Zman Kehillah*/זמן קהילה (Community Time) Project**:

With support from the Samis Foundation and guidance from Kadima Coaching, SJCS launched an innovative, year-long, school-wide project providing immersive learning experiences on Jewish community and communal ties. In mixed-age groups, students learned about their own families' senses of belonging and undertook meaningful projects to support their local Jewish community.

Led by SJCS teachers and staff, each group met with representatives of local Jewish communal organizations and came up with plans for how the students would support them. We are grateful to the organizations who partnered with us on this project.

- One group helped set tables for Friday night dinner at **Hillel UW**, brought UW-colored decorations of purple and gold, and made goody bags with notes of encouragement for the UW students on their upcoming finals.

- Another group created a lemonade stand to raise money for **Stroum JCC** summer camp scholarships, which raised $424.96.

- A third group gathered donations, even encouraging customers at local grocery stores to purchase non-perishable items for their collection, to support **Congregation Beth Shalom**'s food pantry.





- A fourth group worked with the **Seattle Sephardic Network** to create "shields" inspired by identity and belonging, which shield us from anti-Jewish harm, and butterflies to be on exhibit at the **Holocaust Center for Humanity**.

- A fifth group took a field trip to **Jewish Family Services**, designed a big banner for its Giving Garden, and built a food pantry outside the school for people to donate items so people in need can take them.

- A sixth group designed promotional materials for **PJ Library** and baseball card-style cards celebrating Sam Israel, *z"l*, the benefactor of the **Samis Foundation**, along with stickers for both Samis and the **Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle**'s PJ Library program.





- In partnership with The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, we hosted Reset and Refresh, a cohort program for mixed heritage couples to deepen their Jewish engagement through *Shabbat*/שבת experiences. The program was overseen by SJCS Director of Community Engagement, Theresa Glatstein, and led by SJCS Jewish Studies Teacher, Rabbi Laura Rappaport.

- In partnership with PJ Library and The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, SJCS welcomed more than 150 families raising Jewish children under age six to Tot *Shabbat*/שבת gatherings, a *Sukkot*/סוכות decorating event, a *Chanukah*/חנוכה celebration, and a *Tu B'Shevat*/ט"ו בשבט program. Each offered a welcoming, low-barrier way to participate in Jewish communal life while building new relationships with other Seattle Jewish families.



- Prizmah invited SJCS (one of just six schools nationwide) to participate in the pilot year of the Early Childhood Jewish Education Partnership (EJCE), a relationship-building initiative between early childhood programs and Jewish day schools to strengthen the pathway for families to continue their learning journey. SJCS and SEED Early Childhood Program at Temple Beth Am built meaningful connections through shared faculty and student experiences.

- Special field trips this year took our students all over Seattle, including to Cowen Park, Carkeek Park, Magnuson Park, Woodland Park Zoo, Burke Museum, and Ballard Locks.

- As an enhancement to the annual Seward Park *Shabbaton*, all of the fifth graders, together with Head of School David Zimand, stayed at the home of SJCS Director of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Gabrielle Azose, where they enjoyed a home-cooked *Shabbat* meal. They also joined services at Sephardic Bikur Holim (SBH) Congregation on a historic occasion: the first time the SBH and Ezra Bessaroth communities came together for a single service in over a century.

- Third to fifth graders participated in an Authors Summit at the KapKa School, featuring student poems and a presentation by author Suma Subramaniam.

"One of the reasons we chose SJCS was because of the smaller student-teacher ratios, but we truly didn't expect the amount of love, respect, and 1:1 attention our son would receive — especially during some of the more challenging times he's endured as a student. We also appreciate the strong sense of community the school brings to our lives — there's so much meaningful partnership happening both within and outside the school community and it really feels like we are all a part of a big family here."

– Kacie Seigle, SJCS Parent

“"In choosing SJCS we were looking for a school where our kids could be immersed in their Jewish heritage, and where our family could find an inclusive community. We found both."
– Orin Hasson, SJCS Parent



- We made full, active use of Green Lake’s local branch of the Seattle Public Library, making sure all students had library cards and Libby accounts.

- SJCS Head of School David Zimand presented at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Heads Summit as part of its Annual Conference held this year in Seattle.

- SJCS was a proud partner/community sponsor for multiple events, including:
  - The Holocaust Center for Humanity's special exhibit Remembering + Resisting: LGBTQ+ Lives from Nazi Germany to Today
  - The Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW's Dinner in Community
  - The Israeli American Council's Summer Party: Nosh in the Park, which celebrated Seattle's sibling city relationship with Beer Sheva, Israel
  - The Jewish Community Relations Council's Our Voice, Our Future: Jewish Leadership and Civic Engagement event







Onward! In Community Beyond Our School and City

- We hosted a community program called Talking About Israel is Hard. Let's Start. Our Children Need Us To, which presented information from our community survey on Israel education, featured a presentation by consultant Lori Cohen on the neuroscience of human responses to fraught conversations, and fostered thoughtful, small-group dialogue.



- We joined 18 other schools in a two-year Integrating Israel Education cohort, convened by Prizmah and funded by the Maimonides Foundation. We worked with different nationally-recognized leaders in the field on articulating a philosophy of Israel education and on enhancing our current curricula.



- Associate Head of School, Yael Sachs, and Director of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Gabrielle Azose, attended the two-day Unpacked for Educators West Coast Conference, Navigating Israel Education in a Changing Landscape in Los Angeles.

- We hosted a group of Israeli musicians visiting the United States as part of the *Zamru* Ensemble, a flagship program of the Jerusalem Fuchsberg Center. The musicians offered a musical workshop complete with special performances.

- Several SJCS students participated in the National Library of Israel's Curate and Create contest, which invited students from around the world to create posters for *Yom HaAtzmaut*/יום העצמאות (Independence Day). The contest garnered over 450 entries from 17 countries — Abe Bomsztyk, an SJCS fifth grader, was one of the six winners globally, and the only one from the US.

- Congregation Beth Shalom's *ShinShinit* — Israeli high school graduate devoting a gap year to national service — dedicated many days of her free time to volunteer work with students at SJCS, supporting their Hebrew studies and enhancing their encounters with contemporary Israeli society. Following the great success of these interactions, SJCS decided to sponsor a *ShinShinit* for the 2026-2027 school year, in tandem with Mercaz Seattle.

- Fifth graders participated in a special PNW *Shabbaton* at Camp Solomon Schechter, together with students from Portland (OR) Jewish Academy and Richmond (BC) Jewish Day School. Students from each school learned about their home community, and presented a banner sharing their findings.

- We hosted Rabbi Jeremy Bruce, Director of Programming for the Rabbi Sacks Legacy, who met with students and led a special lesson to the faculty and staff.

- In his role as representative of Jewish schools on the Washington Federation of Independent Schools (WFIS) Board, David Zimand partnered with professional colleagues, the Samis Foundation and national leaders of Prizmah to advocate for the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC). This program could bring hundreds of millions of dollars in tuition support to Jewish day schools nationwide—along with other independent and public schools.





Thank you for supporting SJCS!

Together with our community, we continue to provide a welcoming educational community that combines the timeless wisdom of Jewish intellectual heritage with contemporary insights into children's learning and growth. Your generosity gives us hope in a vibrant future.

Any omissions or misspellings are unintentional and we apologize for any oversight.

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