

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Kelley King

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11860 Carmel Creek Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

San Diego CA 92130-2474
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County San Diego

Telephone (858) 704-3759

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Web site/URL http://www.sdja.com

E-mail kking@sdja.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Chaim Heller

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

E-mail cheller@sdja.com

District Name San Diego Jewish Academy Tel. (858) 704-3700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Rabbi Yael Ridberg

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

1. The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	12	5	17
1	12	13	25
2	15	13	28
3	11	19	30
4	17	19	36
5	14	17	31
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	81	86	167

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 5%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	176
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Hebrew

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6%
10 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
15 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2012	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The mission of the San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School is to further academic excellence, social responsibility, and active Jewish living.

PART III – SUMMARY

The San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School is the K-5 division of the San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA) located in the Carmel Valley community of San Diego, California. The Academy is an independent Jewish day school comprised of two divisions: Golda Meir Lower School (grades K-5) and Maimonides Upper School (grades 6-12), in addition to an Early Childhood Center (6 weeks to 4 years old). Currently, there are 436 children enrolled in San Diego Jewish Academy K-12 and 167 students are enrolled in the applicant division, the San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School.

Founded in 1979, SDJA began as a small neighborhood school in rented facilities on the property of Congregation Tifereth Israel in the San Carlos neighborhood of San Diego. A second campus was soon opened in La Jolla to accommodate a growing student population. In 2000, a state-of-the-art 56-acre campus, the current campus, was built in suburban Carmel Valley. SDJA is now the largest Jewish day school in San Diego and recently celebrated its special 36th anniversary.

While 99% of the students of the Lower School are of the Jewish faith, there is a surprising amount of diversity at the school. Approximately 30% of the students are Mexican Jews and native Spanish speakers. The school also has families from South Africa, Canada, Russia, Ukraine and Israel. Families practice Judaism in different ways. Some families are interfaith, some are secular, some are Reform or Conservative Jews, and a few families are Orthodox. SDJA is an open-minded, pluralistic and accepting school community that respects and honors many ways of being Jewish.

SDJA Lower School is committed to challenging young minds with learning experiences that nurture curiosity, creative thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit. The school encourages each child to take risks, try new things and stretch beyond his/her comfort zone. Through understanding each child's profile as a learner, including his/her unique needs, talents and passions, the faculty meets each child where he/she is at academically and then works strategically to maximize each child's growth.

Engagement drives achievement and, to that end, the faculty strives to make learning real-world, relevant and cross-disciplinary through authentic experiences and activities, such as global collaborations, world peace simulation games, design thinking challenges, family history research, entrepreneurial studies, and much more. Expanding learning beyond the four walls of the classroom through meaningful applications of educational technology allow the children to be global citizens and to explore the many possibilities that are open to them in higher education and in life.

Equally important, the school strives to inspire purpose. The shared bond of Jewish teachings is infused throughout all aspects of the curricula. Both in the physical surroundings and through classroom lessons, the school's core values can be seen, heard, and felt. These core values light the path for everything the school does. The Lower School community is committed to doing the right thing (*Menschlikeit*), to being a part of the Jewish people (*Klal Y'Israel*), to studying and learning for life (*Torah*), to prayer and spirituality (*Avodah*), to kindness towards others (*Gemilut Hasadim*), to Love of God (*Ahavat Adonai*), and to love of Israel (*V'ahavtah Yisroel*).

SDJA Lower School's tremendous progress in the last four years is grounded in three very important things: Faculty and administration's dedication to excellence, strong teacher leadership, and the Head of School's unwavering encouragement and support to "dream big." The transformation is evident in many areas – every piece of the curriculum, assessment and instruction has been reviewed, re-imagined, re-aligned and given new life. Systems and structures have been re-designed to maximize the impact of the resources on the students. Personalization – even customization - of learning has become a hallmark of the Lower School. New and exciting curricular initiatives in the areas of STEM, Israel studies, innovation, entrepreneurial studies, musical performance and more are flourishing. Social-emotional learning initiatives and supports have expanded and have ushered in a culture of caring and respect along with greatly improved student behavior – all as employee morale and a shared sense of efficacy have blossomed.

Finally, the Lower School, as a division of the San Diego Jewish Academy, is engaged in continuous

improvement. A Campus Master Plan to upgrade the campus and its facilities for learning of the future was developed in 2016-2017 with the input of hundreds of constituents. During the 2017-2018 school year, the school is similarly engaged in developing a comprehensive Educational Master Plan to identify priorities for program development and educational initiatives in the years to come.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The SDJA Lower School provides an integrated approach which weaves together various disciplines, including cultural and religious teachings. In selecting its curricula, faculty leaders and the administration reviewed the most current educational research and examined various curricular materials across all disciplines. Vertical alignment was ensured with the preschool and middle and high schools. New curricular standards and teaching resources have been adopted since 2014 in all areas of English Language Arts, mathematics and science. All SDJA Lower School students participate in all of the core curriculum subjects, which provide the foundation for future success in their secondary and post-secondary pursuits.

Reading standards are based on Common Core English-Language Arts standards and the Teachers' College Reading Benchmarks. As one component of the Balanced Literacy program, reading instruction focuses on the development of phonological awareness, comprehension and fluency using a Guided Reading approach. Every classroom teacher and learning specialist is trained in Orton-Gillingham so that specialized support is provided immediately to any child showing signs of reading difficulty. All classrooms are equipped with many types of reading material, including sets of leveled readers and chapter books in both fiction and nonfiction and an extensive class library. A variety of computer applications such as RAZ Kids, Lexia and Newsela further support differentiated skill development. Based on ACT Aspire data, more emphasis has been placed on informational reading this year.

In writing, the Lower School customized the Common Core writing standards to set more ambitious benchmarks and to create interdisciplinary connections with Judaica and technology. Standards include the development of organization, elaboration, craft, spelling and punctuation. Students study opinion, narrative, and informational writing in grades 1-5 and narrative and informational writing in kindergarten. The curriculum utilizes children's literature to make a strong connection between reading and writing. For students who are struggling with writing, intensive writing support is provided in grades 3-5 using the more structured Step Up to Writing program.

The spelling program is a developmental spelling, phonics, and vocabulary program which is differentiated to meet the needs of every child. The program addresses the letter-sound identification needs of early emergent readers to those students ready to take on Latin derivational relations. Students work on similar phonemic patterns in their spelling, reading and writing programs, so literacy instruction is tied together and builds on itself.

The goal of the Math in Focus mathematics program, which is based on Common Core standards, is for all students to master mathematical concepts and logical problem-solving skills, to incorporate real world applications of mathematical ideas and methods, and to engage in collaborative active learning. Fewer topics are taught in greater depth to allow students to gain a more meaningful understanding of the concepts and skills taught. Students tackle anchor tasks through an inquiry approach and move from concrete to pictorial to abstract representations. The math program is aligned to prepare students well for moving into the Academy's middle school math classes.

The science curriculum is based on the Next Generation Science Standards and the Project Lead the Way STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) curricular standards. The SDJA Lower School is the only Project Lead the Way (PLTW) elementary school in San Diego County. All students attend science and STEM classes two to three times per week. Science and STEM are integrated with literacy and math and are rigorous and activity-oriented. Students are taught in a complex of three, newly-renovated science learning areas consisting of a science lab classroom, a Maker's Space classroom, and an outdoor learning courtyard.

The school follows the California State Standards in History-Social Science, which emphasize inquiry-based critical thinking skills and promote an engaged and knowledgeable citizenry in history and the related social sciences. Strong emphasis is placed on civics and government starting in kindergarten and first grade when students learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This focus continues through the upper

grades when students learn about US government, history and geography. Through Junior Achievement lessons led by parents and community guest speakers, students also learn how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs which make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. In fifth grade, students participate in a very exciting simulation game experience called World Peace Games in which students work in teams to solve world problems.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At the SDJA Lower School, the goal is to challenge children academically and to also allow children to explore a variety of opportunities, possibilities and interests to the fullest extent. To this end, all students participate in the richness of learning afforded by Judaica, Hebrew, art, music, physical education, technology, and entrepreneurial studies.

An integral part of the daily Judaic Studies curriculum is the study of the tanakh (Bible) because it is the source of the history, literature and values of the Jewish people. Areas of focus include tefila (prayer), Jewish life and thought, and Klal Yisrael (the ethics and values that bring people together). The new Israel curriculum is based on nine enduring understandings which prepare students to visit, study and/or live in Israel some day, if they should choose to do so. Students are also engaged in studying the meaning and observances of all the Jewish holidays through a variety of experiential teaching practices.

Hebrew is a key that opens the doors of Jewish learning, connects the students with Jews past and present, and is the language of classical Jewish texts and the modern, living language that unites the school community with Israel. Through daily instruction starting in kindergarten and continuing through fifth grade, the students develop facility in reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In the fall of 2017, the Lower School adopted an exciting new conversational Hebrew curriculum from Israel, called Ulpan-Or.

Taught by a professional artist and educator, the visual arts program incorporates art history and a variety of two- and three-dimensional media. The art teacher uses the guided drawing method in which students are taught how to approach drawing by breaking seemingly hard subjects into lines and shapes that are familiar to young children. In their once-a-week art classes, students work with various media and techniques. Students' art work is exhibited widely and has won the Best of Show award at the San Diego County Fair Kids Best Exhibit, as well as awards at the San Diego Museum of Art Young Art Exhibition, RAVSAK Judaic Day School Contest, Federal Duck Stamp Program and more.

The general music teacher (who is also a synagogue cantorial soloist and an international professional performer) developed a brand-new, comprehensive K-5 music program for the school which launched in 2016. Students in grades K-2 attend twice per week. Grades 3-5 attend once per week. The music classroom is equipped with a wide variety of instruments and a full class set of keyboards. Students also have access to a professional recording studio on campus. Additional music opportunities for the children this year include recording a Shabbat Songs album, public performances, composing and recording original music, and the creation of a multi-age mentoring program called "Maestro & Maestra."

The Physical Education program, based on California's model PE content standards, helps the students develop the locomotor and intrapersonal skills that they will build upon throughout their K-12 education and beyond. Students attend PE class two to three times per week. In addition to PE classes, the PE teacher offers a before-school Running Club and organized games every day during lunch recess. Afterschool offerings include soccer, track and field, tennis, basketball, Capture the Flag, karate and yoga.

Technology is integrated in to all K-5 classrooms to enhance engagement, to expand differentiation, and to allow students to curate information, communicate and collaborate with learning partners, and to create content. Students have access to 1:1 Chromebooks and iPads at all grades and are confident technology users going into middle school. Educational technology is set to take a giant and exciting leap forward in 2018 with the hiring of a Director for the brand-new "Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking."

The SDJA Lower School is in its second year of implementing an Entrepreneurial Studies strand across all grade levels. Starting in kindergarten, children learn about personal finance and business economics. Fifth

grade is a “capstone” year and involves a more involved, special project. Last year, fifth graders worked with the school’s Campus Master Planning committee and an architectural firm to bring their campus improvement ideas to life. This year, fifth graders are learning how to care for chickens and are starting an egg selling business, called “Epic Eggs,” in collaboration with the school’s gardener, the school chef, their teachers, and a school security guard who is also a chicken farmer.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Instructional Methods:

Direct instruction is used when presenting new craft techniques during writers’ workshop mini-lessons, when teaching reading comprehension strategies, when giving a lab demonstration in science, when presenting math problem-solving strategies, and when giving students instruction on the use of technology. Direct instruction occurs in whole group and small groups settings, as well as one-on-one.

Interactive instruction is also used across the curriculum. Students frequently engage in discussion and debate, especially in Judaica and social studies. Small group projects are very common in science/STEM, social studies, and Judaica. The emphasis in Hebrew is on conversation and this engages students in dramatic presentations and role-plays.

Experiential learning is a special hallmark. All grades participate in six or more field trips per school year, including overnight trips in grades 4 and 5. In social studies, students engage in simulations, such as Junior Achievement's BizTown and World Peace Games. In science/STEM, students build and test models. A large garden, complete with a greenhouse, serves as an outdoor learning environment to support science and Judaica. Story-telling and role-playing feature prominently, especially in Judaica, language arts and guidance counseling. Each spring, the school holds a Day of Design in which all students, all day, work in teams to solve various design challenges.

Interventions:

Small guided reading groups provide every child with daily targeted instruction at his/her level. With a protected daily reading time at every grade and additional reading support teachers, the student-teacher ratio during the 45 minutes of daily Guided Reading time is lowered to 9:1. Every classroom teacher is trained in Orton-Gillingham to ensure early intervention. Spelling is completely differentiated to allow students to be instructed precisely on the level and at the pace needed. Each child has his/her own writing goals. Struggling writers in grades 3-5 participate in a weekly writing intervention group.

In mathematics, students' mastery of concepts and skills is assessed, unit by unit, in order to make flexible grouping decisions and to provide remediation and curriculum compacting as appropriate. Small groups are provided within the classroom with the support of math support teachers. Advanced students receive enrichment, curriculum compacting and, as appropriate, acceleration to the next grade.

Hebrew instruction accommodates students who are new to Hebrew and those who speak Hebrew fluently as their first language. In grades 2-5, a differentiation support person is staffed in the classroom. In grades 3-5, three to four different Hebrew levels are offered at each grade.

The Learning Center, staffed by two credentialed educational therapists, serves the needs of children with mild and moderate language and learning disabilities. Students receive one-on-one and small group intensive instruction tailored to individualized learning goals and objectives. The Learning Center also provides testing accommodations and supports classroom teachers with curriculum accommodations and modifications.

Assessments:

Reading assessments begin in kindergarten with the Core Phonics Survey to assess phonics and phonology, and letter/sound identification and sight word inventories. STAR360 Reading is administered four times per year and Running Records are administered every 2-8 weeks.

Six formal writing samples in three genres serve to map each child’s writing growth on a K-6 Learning

Progression Chart that aligns with grade-level benchmarks. Spelling Inventories, to assess children's mastery of specific phonemic spelling features, are administered formally at least three times per year.

In mathematics, the school utilizes the math program's unit pretests and posttests, chapter benchmark assessments, mid-year tests and end-of-year tests. STAR360 Math is administered four times per year.

In Hebrew, the MaDYK reading assessment (based on the DIBELS English reading assessment) is used several times during the year to monitor student's reading fluency and rate.

In 2017, students in grades 3-5 took the ACT Aspire assessment for the first time. The CTP-4, used in previous years, was replaced in favor of Aspire's alignment with the SDJA Upper School and the ACT college entrance exam.

The school's success is attributable to the fact that the faculty and staff are learners too. They are passionate about mastering their craft and being creative and bold to try new things. Faculty and administration closely monitor students' growth, use assessment data to identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses, work creatively and cooperatively to maximize personalization for all students, seek out well-aligned professional development, and partner effectively with parents - all in order to maintain high levels of student achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Student Clubs have grown in popularity over the past two years. Students suggest the clubs and faculty members sponsor them. Four days a week, clubs meet during lunch and are open to all grades. One example is the Kindness Committee which was created by a 4th grader. The students meet weekly with the guidance counselor to plan acts of kindness all over campus. Other student interest clubs include gardening, crafts, magic tricks, dance, computer coding, drama, art and much more.

Daily Responsive Classroom morning meetings foster prosocial and emotional skills and respectful, democratic learning environments. Additionally, the school counselor teaches a weekly social-emotional curriculum focused on conflict resolution, self-care and mindfulness at all grades. Bullying is addressed through the No Bully approach. A cornerstone of the No Bully Program is the formation of Solution Teams that focus on empathy-building and student-identified solutions to social issues.

Based on the twelve Tribes of Israel, every child is a member of a “tribe” - a multi-grade mix of K-5 children of different nationalities and language backgrounds. Tribes activities build trust, cooperation and social inclusiveness and help students to make friends with children that they might not otherwise get to know. Additionally, the faculty uses a sociometric tool to map out the relationships within each classroom to make sure that all children feel included. Teachers meet to strategize how to support any child who needs support in order to be more socially connected.

Exciting learning experiences help bring learning alive. Recently, fifth graders, who read the novel "Wonder," entered a Kindness Challenge and won a free advance screening of the movie. Students analyzed the movie from various perspectives - cinematography, music, casting, screenwriting. The movie studio Lionsgate, at the teachers' request, sent a confidential copy of the script to the students so that they could study the text features of a screenplay. An independent filmmaker then came to class to discuss the script-writing and directing processes. It was a thrilling experience for students who saw their academic learning applied to the real world.

The SDJA Lower School enjoys a climate of openness, professionalism, mutual respect and trust between the faculty and administration. Teachers are involved in school decision-making and are recognized privately and publicly for their contributions. The SDJA Lower School is a safe and supportive place for teachers to be innovative in their teaching. The school is currently undergoing a fundraising campaign which is, in part, designed to lower teachers' workload and increase compensation.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Deeply meaningful parent involvement at the school happens weekly in gatherings for prayer and celebration. Every Monday morning, parents join children and faculty for a Modeh Ani (“I give thanks”) service to celebrate a new week together. Every Friday afternoon, the school community gathers again for a joyous, high-energy, music-filled service, Kabbalat Shabbat. Parents and grandparents fill the common room to sing and dance together. Another beautiful time of togetherness is the fourth graders' annual Havdalah service marking the end of the Sabbath. Families embrace in a circle, with the lights turned low and braided candles blazing, to sing the blessings and songs. Holiday services and performances for Passover, Chanukah, Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot are also times when the school welcomes many parents and grandparents to campus. These opportunities provide beautiful opportunities for the formation of Jewish identity and continuity.

Every fall, the school hosts a multi-generational day when children's grandparents and special friends come to school to participate in shared learning and bonding activities with the children. In January, the annual “Showcase Night” puts a very festive spotlight on the students' learning with interactive displays including written pieces, artwork, science projects, videos, book reports, dancing and musical performances. Students proudly serve as docents as their parents come to tour the gymnasium which has been completely

transformed with their creations.

The school connects with parents at monthly “Coffee Talks” (conversations with the principal and teachers about the curriculum and school initiatives), at parent education workshops, on field trips, through school committee work, and at parent-teacher conferences. Formal parent-teacher conferences are 45-60 minutes in length and are held twice per year. Additional conferences are scheduled whenever needed or requested. The school sends an online questionnaire to parents to identify any questions or concerns parents may have in advance of their conferences.

School-wide, a parent satisfaction survey is sent out twice a year. The faculty and administration regularly seek parent input on a number of matters of importance (uniforms, technology, homework, class placements and more) and then incorporate parent input into the school's decision-making. Parents also lead the Parent-Teacher Organization and have positions of leadership on the Board of Trustees and school committees.

All families who are new to the school community are paired with a mentor family. All families are encouraged to invite other families to dinner in their homes. Additional examples of community engagement include hosting Holocaust survivors for a Passover Seder, parent mixer events, Shabbat San Diego, the annual Israel celebration, and more.

3. Professional Development:

The SDJA Lower School budgets over \$2,000 per faculty member annually for the purpose of professional development. Professional development is chosen carefully to align with the school's curricular and programmatic initiatives. The master schedule has been built so that all teachers have weekly collaboration time to discuss student needs and the improvement of practice. The school offers extensive job-embedded development, outside expert trainings on campus, and attendance at regional, national and international conferences.

“Instructional rounds” is a job-embedded form of professional development that enhances teachers’ pedagogical skills and a culture of collaboration. Teachers compare their instructional practices, identify new strategies to address problems of practice, and strengthen shared practice. The instructional rounds initiative is led by a faculty member who is a Legacy Heritage Teacher Fellow through Brandeis University. This faculty member completed two years of intensive in-person and online professional development to increase her capacity for teacher leadership and, as such, fosters many grass-roots teacher initiatives.

The school also brings outside experts onto the campus. The school determined that it needed to do a better job with early identification and intervention for struggling readers. Therefore, every classroom teacher was trained in Orton-Gillingham, a specialized reading approach for children with reading difficulties. With the adoption of new literacy standards and curricula in the last three years, a literacy expert conducted nine days of intensive training in balanced literacy, including assessments, guided reading, writing goals, and writing conferences. An on-staff teacher leader now leads the school's literacy professional development. Another example of ongoing, on-campus training is the school's work with the No Bully organization.

Finally, teachers travel widely to attend high-quality professional development opportunities. In the last year, teachers have attended many conferences, including Teaching Tolerance, Design Thinking, Project Lead the Way, California Association for the Gifted, National Science Teachers Association, International Society for Technology in Education, Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, OESIS and QTIP. The school’s guidance counselor has received advanced training in mindfulness from the Center for Mindfulness at UC San Diego.

Many teachers, as well as the principal, present at conferences, including the National Association of Independent Schools, San Diego Independent School Consortium, California Mathematics Council and more. The Lower School principal is the author of three books in the field of education and presents nationally two to three times per year. Prior to coming to the SDJA Lower School, the principal worked

internationally as a professional developer focused on closing gender achievement gaps in literacy, math and science.

4. School Leadership:

The administration of San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School consists of a Head of Lower School (principal) and a Director of Judaic Studies/Vice-Principal. The Lower School is a division of the San Diego Jewish Academy, which is administered by the Head of School and the SDJA Board of Trustees. The Head of Lower School serves on the Head of School's Senior Leadership Team.

Teacher leadership is created and nurtured in both formal and informal ways. Every year, the Head of Lower School convenes a Leadership Advisory Committee comprised of teacher representatives from various grade levels and departments. In LAC, as well as in other topic-specific sub-committees, teacher representatives provide insight and recommendations on important work such as master scheduling, standards-based report cards, curriculum development, technology, budget, and professional development. At weekly faculty meetings, teachers are regularly engaged in school policy analysis and decision-making related to many more issues, including, but not limited to, uniforms, class placement procedures, parent communication, and homework. Grade-level teacher teams meet monthly with the principal and vice-principal to discuss how student needs are being met. The principal regularly attends teachers' weekly collaboration meetings.

The leadership philosophy of the school is grounded in several important commitments that are embraced by all and can be seen, heard and felt throughout the school on a daily basis. Every decision is put to the test: "Is this good for kids?" High expectations are set for all with an understanding that individuals and organizations get better only through being ambitious and trying new things. With the shared understanding that making mistakes is a condition for growth, students and teachers alike are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones, take risks, accept feedback, and celebrate the sometimes messy process of learning. Leadership must be shared and all team members bring unique talents, strengths and interests that can be contributed for the greater good.

The school's leadership philosophy is also grounded in the need to develop and continuously nurture a strong foundation of trust and communication between all constituents. Through trust and open communication, children's needs can be held central. Conversations, even difficult ones, can be had in a respectful manner and with positive intentions and a growth mindset at the core.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At the San Diego Jewish Academy Lower School, the faculty, staff and administration know that trust matters and that relationships are sacred. In the last four years, the trust level at the school has risen dramatically to new heights. Shared decision-making has emerged, lines of communication are open, teachers feel supported, and collaboration has flourished. Teachers are efficacious and ambitious. They are willing to innovate, they are open to new ideas, and they try new things with energy and excitement.

This blossoming of relational trust in the school has been the most instrumental component in the school's success. It is now the foundation upon which everything else is built. It has proven to be the fuel for the many improvements and initiatives that have been taken on and fully embraced in the last four years. Extensive research shows that high levels of trust yield a significant positive impact on student achievement and that correlation has been evidenced at the Lower School.

Of course, relational trust is put most to the test when a school encounters instances of disagreement, disappointment or interpersonal conflict and this sometimes happens. Even at these times, however, the school faculty and staff make sure that all individuals feel valued. There are positive assumptions about the intentions of others and shared goals are acknowledged and valued. There is a strong belief and trust that every member of the school is motivated by what is best for children and, in that spirit, diverse ideas are welcome.

At the SDJA Lower School, the high-trust environment extends to the students as well. Students feel safe to struggle, try new things, make mistakes, and accept feedback. They know that their teachers and classmates support them and are there to catch them when they fall. The school emphasizes students' development of strong "non-cognitive" skills including collaboration and caring, grit, resilience, flexibility, problem-solving, and integrity. The school staff and administration place a high value on the relational trust that they have built, recognizing that it comes through the daily practices of humility, reflection, and patience. The school culture has been – and will continue to be – a powerful driver in the school's capacity to nurture the healthy development of children and attain the highest levels of academic success.

PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Independent

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$24000
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$10446

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 21%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 45%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: ACT Aspire

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: ACT

Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	416
Number of students tested	36
Percent of total students tested	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: STAR Math was used as the alternative assessment for two students. One student was a non-English speaker. The other student was on medical homebound instruction at the time of ACT Aspire administration.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	418
Number of students tested	31
Percent of total students tested	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: STAR Math was used as the alternative assessment for two students. Both students were non-English speakers.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	422
Number of students tested	22
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	414
Number of students tested	36
Percent of total students tested	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: STAR Reading and Running Records were used as the alternative assessments for two students. One student was a new-arrival ELL student. The other student was on medical homebound instruction at the time of ACT Aspire administration.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	31
Percent of total students tested	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: STAR Reading and Running Records were used as the alternative assessments for two students. Both students were non-English speaking.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
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SCHOOL SCORES	
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SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: