

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



INTRODUCTION

In early 2023, BJE embarked on an ambitious journey to develop a new five-year strategic plan. The year-long process was designed to be thorough, thoughtful, and inclusive.

The resulting plan proactively and effectively addresses current and emergent Jewish educational needs in the changing landscape of Greater Los Angeles. It is the product of a data-informed, collaborative process led by BJE's Board of Directors, with participation from BJE's Advisory Board and staff.

The strategic plan represents goals and strategies to which BJE is committed over the period 2024-2029. Our board and staff will, annually, develop implementation priorities and performance metrics, recognizing that the plan must be adaptable to changing needs and circumstances.

As a forward-looking organization, we are evolving to meet new realities within and outside our organization while ensuring that our strategic plan and associated actions stay true to our vision and mission.

Vision: Jewish learning is the foundation of vibrant Jewish living. BJE will ensure present and future generations of knowledgeable Jews who are committed to their religious and cultural heritage and an enduring connection with Israel. BJE will play a vital role in fostering meaningful Jewish continuity, strengthening contemporary American Jewish life and promoting lifelong Jewish learning.

Mission: The mission of BJE is to enhance quality, increase access, and encourage participation in Jewish education throughout the Jewish communities of Greater Los Angeles. BJE, independently and in collaboration with schools and others, is an advocate, planner, catalyst, and creative leader for strengthening and advancing Jewish learning, with special emphasis on children and youth, early childhood through high school, their educators and parents.

This transformational time is exciting for all of us at BJE. We extend our sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the in-depth and insightful research, the reflective analysis, and the development of our new five-year strategic plan. We are confident that its successful implementation will ensure that BJE continues to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and strengthen our organization.

"Strategic planning helps ensure that not only are we doing things right, but we are doing the right things. Our plan will help define BJE's direction for years to come."

Craig Rutenberg
President, BJE



ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

We started by listening. Our discovery process included gathering input from over 350 stakeholders. We heard more than 80 internal and external perspectives through interviews and focus groups. We received substantive feedback from nearly 300 survey respondents representing funders, Jewish educators, BJE's volunteer leadership, and members of the broader Los Angeles Jewish community. Collectively, these individuals represented a diverse mix of roles, backgrounds, denominations, school and program types.

We studied the changing Jewish community and assessed our organizational performance. To ensure our planning decisions were data-informed, we examined numerous factors, including changing community demographics, habits, and offerings. And we thoroughly reviewed our programs, activities, and operations. Beyond providing valuable insights, the assessment established new benchmarks from which we will measure our progress.

We gathered to understand, share, and plan. Our process included ten collaborative working sessions over five months.

- The first session was held in person at Stephen Wise Temple and involved our Board, Advisory Board, and senior staff. During that session, we reviewed the research findings and engaged in robust discussions to identify the challenges and opportunities essential for BJE to address in the coming years.
- Four smaller work groups of volunteers and staff met virtually to dive deeply into specific topical areas to formulate the plan's core elements.
- The draft goals and strategies created by the work groups were presented during an in-person meeting to our Board, Advisory Board, and senior staff for additional input before the plan was finalized.

The research, analysis, and discussions provided the insights needed to develop a plan that is both comprehensive and adaptable. We look forward to measuring and, annually, reporting our progress over the five year term of the strategic plan.



OUR AIMS, GOALS & STRATEGIES

We will strive to meet three overarching aims throughout the plan's implementation:

- Serve the full spectrum of Jewish schools and families from early education through high school.
- Identify and serve as a catalyst for fulfilling unmet needs related to Jewish education in Los Angeles.
- Increase our impact within the communities we serve.

The plan is organized into four strategic goal areas that articulate what BJE aspires to achieve over the next five years. Three represent focused areas of action, and Organizational Excellence encompasses several cross-cutting functions that support everything BJE does.



**Increase Access
to Jewish
Education**



**Engage Families
in Jewish
Education**



**Ensure
Quality Jewish
Education**



Organizational Excellence



OUR HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

The following goals give expression to BJE's focus in each of our strategic areas.

Increase Access to Jewish Education

Goal 1: Help ensure the sustainability of BJE-affiliated schools to maximize access to Jewish education.

Goal 2: Advance advocacy efforts that address systemic affordability issues.

Engage Families in Jewish Education

Goal 1: Inspire Jewish families in Los Angeles to seek Jewish education.

Goal 2: Serve as the premier Los Angeles hub for connecting families with Jewish educational opportunities.

Goal 3: Enable teens and families to participate in unique and meaningful Jewish educational experiences.

Ensure Quality Jewish Education

Goal 1: Be a trusted resource for professional development for the full array of Jewish schools in Los Angeles.

Goal 2: Further excellence in Jewish education through accreditation.

Goal 3: Help build a robust and qualified pipeline of teachers and staff.

Organizational Excellence

Goal 1: Provide excellent lay leadership opportunities to individuals who want to make a difference in Jewish education.

Goal 2: Raise BJE's visibility and increase its donor base and support.

Goal 3: Maximize BJE's organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and financial health.



Effectively pursuing these goals, and strengthening BJE's organizational capacity to achieve them, requires strategic action. Following are the strategies BJE will deploy to accomplish each of the identified goals.



Increase Access to Jewish Education

Goal 1: Help ensure the sustainability of BJE-affiliated schools to maximize access to Jewish education.

Strategies:

- a. Serve as the primary technical resource for helping schools access and fully utilize available government funds and services.
- b. Provide training and guidance to help schools strengthen their fundraising programs.
- c. Provide timely information about new, creative funding and tuition models for schools.
- d. Seek and distribute scholarship funds to schools.
- e. Explore and facilitate collaborations among schools to offset costs or gain economies of scale.

Goal 2: Advance advocacy efforts that address systemic affordability issues.

Strategies:

- a. Represent the interests of Jewish schools by continuing to play an active role in coalitions that encourage legislation that benefits private schools.
- b. Evaluate new advocacy efforts and consider participation when they align with BJE's priorities.



Engage Families in Jewish Education

Goal 1: Inspire Jewish families in Los Angeles to seek Jewish education.

Strategies:

- Support BJE-affiliated schools in achieving their student recruitment and retention goals by providing marketing resources, convening parent education forums, and facilitating connections among early childhood centers, part-time Jewish educational programs, and day schools.
- Evaluate the feasibility and likely impact of marketing campaign(s) to motivate Jewish families to consider Jewish education; implement campaign(s) if deemed advantageous.
- Secure opportunities for BJE professionals to publish and present to Los Angeles area Jewish families on the importance of early and continuing Jewish education.

Goal 2: Serve as the premier Los Angeles hub for connecting families with Jewish educational opportunities.

Strategies:

- Enhance JKidLA's content and concierge offerings to meet the needs of Los Angeles' diverse Jewish population.
- Execute a sustained marketing campaign using all available communications channels to build awareness for JKidLA among Jewish audiences and schools.
- Evolve the technology platforms used to deliver JKidLA services.
- Formulate new ways to measure and increase the impact of JKidLA.

Goal 3: Enable teens and families to participate in unique and meaningful Jewish educational experiences.

Strategies:

- Continue to provide high-quality Jewish experiential programming for teens, including Israel education, while identifying ways of involving more Jewish teens in such programs.
- Explore interest in and potentially host activities for families.



Ensure Quality Jewish Education

Goal 1: Be a trusted resource for professional development for the full array of Jewish schools in Los Angeles.

Strategies:

- a. Provide responsive, relevant, and timely professional development to Heads of Schools, administrators, and teachers.
- b. Explore ways of better meeting and, as appropriate, addressing the unique needs of all school types.

Goal 2: Further excellence in Jewish education through accreditation.

Strategies:

- a. Ensure Jewish educator participation in the CAIS/WASC accreditation process.
- b. Conduct finance and governance reviews to address the long-term financial health of Jewish schools.
- c. Assist new schools in participating in the accreditation process.

Goal 3: Help build a robust and qualified pipeline of teachers and staff.

Strategies:

- a. Attract qualified teachers to careers in Jewish schools (e.g., establish relationships with university schools of education and communicate the benefits of careers in Jewish education).
- b. Serve as a valued resource for connecting schools and candidates.
- c. Help schools create positive school cultures and effective recruitment and retention.
- d. Evaluate the success of BJE's early childhood mentoring pilot and expand, if warranted.



Organizational Excellence

Goal 1: Provide excellent lay leadership opportunities to individuals who want to make a difference in Jewish education.

Strategies:

- a. Update BJE's governance structure and processes to optimize board engagement.
- b. Execute a recruitment plan to attract highly capable, committed individuals and ensure the Board reflects the diversity of the Los Angeles Jewish community.
- c. Develop and implement an ongoing board training program.

Goal 2: Raise BJE's visibility and increase its donor base and support.

Strategies:

- a. Increase public awareness for the unique and vital role BJE plays in Jewish education in Los Angeles.
- b. Increase the role that the Board and volunteers play in BJE's fundraising.
- c. Expand BJE's ability to reach new donors, and cultivate and steward individual donors, organizations, and foundations.
- d. Demonstrate compelling outcomes to attract donor investments.
- e. Collaborate with other organizations to gain support from grantmakers seeking national impact.
- f. Explore providing more adult programming to facilitate greater awareness and connection to BJE.

Goal 3: Maximize BJE's organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and financial health.

Strategies:

- a. Execute a successful Executive Director leadership transition and create a succession plan for other key positions.
- b. Develop and implement an integrated data management and technology strategy to enable increased fundraising, track program outcomes, and achieve greater efficiencies.
- c. Maintain strong financial and operational policies and practices.
- d. Align BJE's staffing and resources to ensure the successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- e. Continue to attract and retain highly qualified staff.
- f. Ensure a collaborative and healthy work environment.