

**HEAD OF SCHOOL**

# **OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**





## ABOUT MIROWITZ

When prospective parents and community members walk into Mirowitz, they say something along these lines: "Something's different about this school. You can feel it the moment you walk in the door." It's the feeling you get when you are surrounded by people who look for the best in others and who know that kindness begets more kindness. Every morning at Mirowitz we consider how to learn better, how to teach better, how to lead better, and how to be better friends to each other. That unique loving spirit is the essence of Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School.

Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School is a pluralistic Jewish independent school for children kindergarten through eighth grade. The school offers a robust general and Jewish studies curriculum, and we purposefully infuse our learning environment with *simcha* — intentional Jewish joy.

At Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, we believe that school should be a place of academic excellence. School also should be a place where children grow to be socially responsible, to develop a moral compass that will guide their leadership, and where Jewish learning inspires children to connect to their heritage and to engage in meaningful ways with the world.

We are committed to providing our students with an extraordinary childhood. Each minute we have with our students is valuable. We strive to fill them with learning that is meaningful and helps them reach their highest potential.

We are the only pluralistic Jewish day school in St. Louis, and welcome Jewish families from all denominations, those who do not affiliate with a denomination, and even non-Jewish families interested in a Jewish learning environment for their children. We have created a school community that encourages members who express their values and Judaism in diverse ways to engage each other with curiosity, passion and respect. We have seen that the purposeful practice of pluralism exposes children to authentic, alternative views and results in better learning across all subject areas.

We are committed to providing our students with an extraordinary childhood marked by:

- a learning community that prepares students to excel in the most demanding academic environments.
- teachers who celebrate each student's diverse strengths and interests—differentiating learning to challenge and engage each child.
- Lived values: **בְּטָחוֹן** (safety / trust), **הַכֶּרֶת הַטוֹב** (recognizing the good / gratitude), **כְּבוֹד** (respect), **קְהֵלָה** (community), **לִימוּד** (learning), **שִׂמְחָה** (intentional joy), **תִּיקוּן** (repair).
- adventure experiences and immersion trips that give students opportunities to revisit history, learn in authentic situations and explore natural ecosystems. (See video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFbTcoCIYBw>)
- an emphasis on fine arts (including music, band, drama and visual art) that allows students to engage all of their intelligences.
- opportunities to connect with Israel, and to understand Israel's role in shaping the historical, theological and sociological experiences of the Jewish people.
- Jewish prayer services that allow students to set an intention for the kind of people they hope to be that day and to engage in sophisticated discussions.
- encouragement to effect social change and inspire others to join them in the repair of the world.

Answering the question “How old is Mirowitz?” is no small challenge. Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School is the result of the merger of Solomon Schechter Day School (Schechter) and Saul Mirowitz Day School - Reform Jewish Academy (RJA). Schechter was 31 years old at the time of merger, and RJA was 12 years old. We just began our 10th year as a merged school, and the challenges of the merger are fortunately behind us! Even so, our collective history includes those of both of our legacy schools. We respect the visions of their founders and count all alumni as “Mirowitz alumni.”

We value the socio-economic, racial, cultural and religious diversity, as well as the richness brought to our school by families from other cities, countries, cultures and practices. We work hard to find the means to help families afford day school despite the ever-changing stability of the economy. Approximately 50 percent of our families receive some level of tuition remission or financial aid.

## VISION

A vibrant, socially responsible, and inspired Jewish community led by educated, capable, energetic, joyous, compassionate, ethical, and inquisitive leaders.

## MISSION

Provide the highest quality secular and Jewish education, enabling students to become life-long learners and leaders and to apply Jewish values to all aspects of life.

## VALUES

Mirroring a famous phrase from *Pirkei Avot* (*al shloshe d'varim*), our school stands on three things: **Academic Excellence**, **Social Responsibility** and **Jewish Knowledge**.

Academic excellence: We continually seek to identify, and then thoughtfully and effectively implement the best known educational practices and curriculum available by:

- practicing constructivist learning methodologies and principles that allow children to acquire knowledge through authentic interactions, adventures, and explorations. We believe that children should have a voice in their learning that engaged learning allows children to reach their potential.
- instilling a love of learning and an eagerness to seek knowledge and understanding.
- creating an environment that encourages deep thinking, problem solving, and intellectual risk taking.
- graduating students with the strongest possible preparation for success in high school, college, and their adult lives.

Jewish knowledge: We support our students in developing an extensive knowledge of Judaism, develop each student's Jewish identity, and build a profound commitment to Israel and the Jewish people. Our curriculum:

- Focuses on developing our students' skills in
  - engaging with original, Hebrew-language Biblical texts as critical, creative and empathetic readers.
  - leading and engaging in meaningful prayer experiences.
  - exploring the stories, rituals, and values connected with the Jewish holiday cycle for the sake of empowering students to mark these holidays in meaningful ways.

- is founded on a commitment to the autonomy of the individual in belief and practice, as well as a commitment to egalitarianism and an implicit understanding that there is a wide range of authentic expressions of Jewish identity and religious practice.
- targets both direct Jewish learning and artfully integrates Jewish content so children build authentic connections between Jewish teachings and the world around them.
- builds strength, pride and conviction in our students' Jewish heritage, and the ability to add to the diversity of the world.
- includes both a Judaic Studies component and integration of Jewish learning into all subjects.
- in Hebrew, follows ACTFL research, practices and recommendations, empowering students to develop authentic language skills.
- emphasizes modern Hebrew as a communicative heritage language and introduces each class to liturgical and biblical Hebrew.

Social responsibility: Students consistently translate lessons about social justice into action, knowing that they can play a significant role in repairing the world. Our approach:

- fosters a community that is welcoming to a student body that reflects the diversity of our Jewish community; families from varying levels of Jewish observance, from a broad socioeconomic range, and from across the full geography of the St. Louis area.
- creates opportunities for students to explore their own ability to better the world and use their energy to fight for and preserve freedom and justice.
- conveys a blueprint for a just and ethical society where members treat one another with kindness, respect, sensitivity, and an appreciation of differences.
- provides tools for a lifetime of leadership and the skills to build consensus, to collaborate, to lead with confidence, and to make decisions based on Jewish values.
- creates a moral compass that will guide students throughout their lives.

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Our K-5 constructivist curriculum has been designed to recognize the infinite potential of elementary education — experiential learning that is challenging, significant and meaningful; students who build authentic connections between Judaism and the world around them; children who know from experience that they can make a difference; and a community where acts of kindness happen every day.

At Mirowitz, the world is our laboratory. Students learn about the political process by lobbying their elected officials, about the Civil War at Lincoln's boyhood home and about sustainability at Heifer International Farm. A unit on our local biome will include hikes in the prairie, restoration of the prairie, an overnight in the prairie and work growing a prairie at school. Students study geology in caves, head to the woodlands to study biotic and abiotic components, and visit streams to study erosion.

Beginning in third grade, students go on annual adventure trips designed to enhance personal growth, strengthen teamwork skills and offer a deeper understanding of our collective responsibility to better the world. The adventures integrate science, history, Hebrew language and Jewish studies.

Each class has a full-time general studies teacher supplemented by specialists in Hebrew language, Judaics, music, art, physical education, drama and library science.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Core Curriculum** includes the study of science, math, literature, writing, social studies, prayer, Hebrew and classical Jewish texts. Teachers work with students to translate high academic expectations into learning that is challenging, exploratory and engages higher-order thinking.

We start each school year of Middle School with a social justice trip designed to give students a profound look at world issues, to engage them in personal values clarification and connect them with one another across grade levels. Their Middle School experience culminates with the 8th grade Israel Experience which cements all they have learned about Israel in their studies at Mirowitz.

### **Middle School competencies include:**

Exceptional verbal, technological and written communication skills.

Collaborative skills.

Creative thinking and problem solving.

Leadership capacity.

Organization, persistence and self-advocacy.

Ability to synthesize and analyze.

Appreciation of diverse perspectives, peoples, places and cultures.

A personal connection to and nuanced understanding of Israel.

An increasingly sophisticated Jewish lens through which to view the world.



# HEAD OF SCHOOL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This position requires an educator with significant experience who has spent some time in a top administrative role. Candidates should be innovative and knowledgeable in current best educational practices, able to guide faculty and staff and attract new talent, and to oversee day-to-day operations with skill, passion and a sense of humor.

Roles include:

- **EDUCATIONAL LEADER:**

*Head of School will bring the school's values to life, and champion its mission and vision.*

- Lead the development and implementation of all educational programs, including general education, Judaic studies, and extra-curricular programs, in a way that aligns with the school's mission, vision and values.
- Support and guide the school's child-centered, Constructivist-based curriculum for both general and Judaic studies.
- Ensure the success of all students through the support of varied methods of instruction.
- Create a culture that reinforces the school's values including: a love of learning, a passion for social responsibility, joyful Jewish learning, Jewish pluralism, a love of Israel, a culture of kindness, and the creation of significant learning memories.

- **SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEADER:**

*Head of School will build, cultivate and engage a community of faculty, students, families, alumni, donors and leaders of other Jewish agencies in a shared commitment to providing Mirowitz students a childhood filled with meaning.*

- Serve as the key spokesperson, visionary leader and advocate for the school.
- Enhance all school relationships, including those with parents, the Jewish community, and the secular community.
- Lead a systematic student recruitment and retention process.
- Collaborate with the board of trustees, its chair, and its committees to carry out established school policies; attend meetings, prepare reports, maintain board records, and keep trustees informed on all aspects of the school's operation.

- Work with the board of trustees and the school's administrative team to identify and prioritize strategies for institutional growth, academic excellence and community engagement.
- Represent the school in its relations with state and federal agencies, and with educational organizations and accrediting agencies.

## ● **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR:**

*Head of school will lead a team to ensure the effective administration and execution of the school.*

- Attract, hire, develop, evaluate and retain a world-class team to execute and augment the school's mission and vision.
- Supervise faculty and staff, setting standards for performance and holding employees accountable to deliver against them.
- Cultivate future leadership of the school and make intentional investments to help them grow. Guide, motivate, and empower faculty and staff to grow professionally.
- Promote a team spirit among faculty and staff in support of the school's mission.
- Manage all aspects of the school's operations.
- Lead a team of professionals responsible for development, marketing, admissions and administration.
- Maintain the highest standards in safety, both physical and cyber. Ensure that safety protocols are established and updated. Communicate those protocols to the community to instill confidence and a sense of security.
- Maintain, and ultimately increase, student enrollment through effective recruitment and retention efforts. Oversee the school's "Tangle Protocol" to solve learning, social and other challenges in a timely manner.
- Ensure the school and faculty have all appropriate certifications and comply with all associated regulations, without exception.
- Address and manage unplanned or unexpected situations by bringing in the appropriate people—both inside school and outside experts; communicate openly, provide transparency and leadership, and act with care and consideration.
- Ensure the effective maintenance of the existing facilities and technology.



- **FISCAL MANAGER:**

*Head of School will ensure the long-term financial viability of the school.*

- Collaborate with the Board of Trustees to increase the school's revenue.
- Manage the school's finances within the budget.
- Work with development professionals to cultivate and effect generous financial support of the school.
- Make wise investments that improve the school and deliver superior learning to Mirowitz students.
- Make strategic organizational decisions while safeguarding the educational experience of the students.

- **LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS:**

*Head of school will have these traits:*

- Dynamic, inspirational, charismatic leadership style.
- Deep knowledge of current best educational practices and innovative approaches to learning.
- Display sound judgement and strong approach to decision making steeped in logic and facts. Proactively and effectively engage the expertise within the school's community to inform decision making when appropriate.
- Lead with compassion and consistency; model the values of *kavod* and *kehilla* to students, employees, parents, donors and all school stakeholders.
- Apply and connect Jewish principles and learnings to daily situations.
- Collaborate with and seek guidance from the community in solving problems and shaping the future of the school and the local Jewish community.
- Be entrepreneurial, act with a sense of ownership for the institution and its community, openly recognize potential problems and conflict, and take the necessary steps to resolve them in a way that ensures the school's continued success.
- Embody a love of learning. Celebrate curiosity and inquiry. Empower staff and faculty to be continuous learners, to deliver superior programs and be part of a collaborative team that pursues excellence.
- Recognize the importance of communication in building community and take care to use words thoughtfully and with consideration.
- Effectively manage a team by listening actively, identifying strengths in others, and enabling teachers and staff in their own leadership capacities.

## ABOUT THE ST. LOUIS JEWISH COMMUNITY

The St. Louis Jewish population includes approximately 60,000 individuals. A recent study showed that since 1995, the number of Jewish households in the St. Louis area has grown, that the community is stable, and that young adults are a large, diverse, and geographically concentrated segment. The St. Louis Jewish community is pluralistic, with kosher restaurants including a deli and a dairy Indian restaurant, and 18 synagogues serving Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist congregations. Other findings from the study include: 43% of St. Louis Jews have visited Israel and nearly half (47%) of young adults between 18 and 34 say they are “very attached” to Israel. St. Louis Jews continue a long tradition of being philanthropic, with more than 90% giving to charitable causes, and 6 out of 10 giving to Jewish charities.

The Jewish community is vibrant, and hosts multiple community celebrations each year: a Jewish book festival, Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations, Sababa: a Jewish cultural arts fair, a Jewish film festival, a Jewish theater and more.

## ABOUT ST. LOUIS

The St. Louis metropolitan area, home to 2.8 million residents, offers world-class educational, medical, and cultural institutions, extensive outdoor recreation activities, two professional sports teams, and a celebrated music scene. A community with a remarkably low cost of living for all, with the comforts and attractions it affords, St. Louis is a big city with the convenience and connectivity of a smaller one.

St. Louis is a wonderful and affordable place to live, with an extraordinary cultural inheritance that often astonishes visitors with the richness of its arts and culture and the breadth and depth of its opportunities for entertainment. Many of St. Louis’s cultural institutions are nationally and world-renowned, including:

- The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the second-oldest symphony in the United States and consistently ranked among the best;

- The Saint Louis Zoo, one of the few free zoos in the nation and known worldwide for its conservation efforts;
- The Saint Louis Art Museum, another free institution, featuring one of the country's great comprehensive collections and boasting a new \$162 million wing opened in 2013; and,
- The Missouri Botanical Garden, one of the world's leading botanical research facilities.

Recognized for its contributions to nearly every genre of American music, St. Louis is home to dozens of venues for enjoying live music. Ragtime and the blues have a special place in the city's history and remain popular in local clubs, while the Big Muddy Blues Festival attracts over 30,000 people annually to the Mississippi riverfront. The city also boasts an abundance of notable art and architecture, film festivals (including the St. Louis Jewish Film Festival), and over 40 farmers' markets, including the historic Soulard Farmers Market. These are only a fraction of the cultural opportunities St. Louis offers.

The city itself has expansive green space. St. Louis maintains more than 40 parks, including the region's crown jewel, Forest Park. With jogging and bicycle trails, ball fields, 36 holes of golf, museums, and other cultural institutions, Forest Park is a well-equipped and gorgeous public space. In 2013, it was named one of the "World's (10) most beautiful city parks" by Travel & Leisure.

St. Louis is the "Gateway to the West," and the soaring Eero Saarinen designed Gateway Arch graces the city's eastern border on the Mississippi River. A major renovation of the Arch grounds was completed in 2018, giving St. Louis a scenic, more accessible, and more interesting riverfront at the site of the city's founding, tying the iconic monument seamlessly to downtown.

St. Louis is also one of the nation's great sports cities, home to Major League Baseball's Cardinals, one of the best-known and most successful major league franchises in all of sports. Fans of both the Cardinals and the National Hockey League's St. Louis Blues rank high in fan satisfaction.

Greater St. Louis is also home to numerous colleges that compete nationally, and its central location and world-class venues have supported St. Louis as a popular city to host NCAA Division 1 college championships. St. Louis has long been a national leader in both health care

and medical/life sciences research; the region's medical institutions draw top talent from around the globe. With Washington University School of Medicine leading the way and St. Louis University School of Medicine making its own significant contribution, the region is consistently among the largest recipients of National Institutes for Health (NIH) funding in the country.

While the biggest driver of the regional economy is health science and services, St. Louis has a highly diversified business economy and is home to the headquarters of 17 Fortune 1,000 companies as well as a strong start-up community. Affordable housing across a variety of different neighborhoods and strong public and private schools, including Mirowitz and several Orthodox Jewish schools, add to a high quality of life for St. Louis residents. US News and World Report noted the "historic" metro area for "a family-friendly reputation and tight-knit communities." (See news story [here](#).)

## **TO APPLY:**

To apply to be the next head of school of Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, send your résumé and cover letter to Amy Wasser, Senior Director of Prizmah Services, Prizmah Center for Jewish day schools, [amyw@prizmah.org](mailto:amyw@prizmah.org).