

State of the School

February 2024

Solomon Schechter Day School
of Greater Hartford



Short D'var Torah

Na'aseh ve-nishma: “(Everything that God has stated,) we will do, and we will obey/understand.” (Ex. 24:7)

Overview of tonight

1. Highlights of Schechter's amazing story at this moment in the school's life—organized by Core Values
2. Challenges and opportunities
3. Q & A

Larger themes to look out for



- Nurturing creativity as a disposition, and believing that **creating is an essential element of learning**
- **Kavod**: building a culture of mutual respect
- Working to strengthen our ability to support **diverse learners**

Chochmah—חכמה—Wisdom



We believe true wisdom comes when we ask complex questions, consider multiple perspectives with empathy, grapple with original texts and primary sources, study the world around us, and discover personal meaning.

Highlights: *Chochmah*—חכמה—Wisdom



- Early Childhood: deeper Hanukkah learning
- New child-focused Early Childhood conference format
- Early Childhood staff trip to Boston
- Enhanced Hebrew in the EC classrooms

Highlights: *Chochmah*—חכמה—Wisdom



- STEAMFest last year, and what we'll see this year
- The Scott Shoham Makerspace/Design Studio
- Makerspace learning/activities (robotics, integration)

Highlights: *Chochmah*—חכמה—Wisdom



- Small School Alliance trips
- Athletics: more games
- Drama: outstanding performance
- Art electives are popular
- Reading initiative: UFLI training, reading interventionist, results

Lev Tov—לב טוב—*Good Heart*



We believe that by learning to love kindness, pursue justice, treat all human beings with respect, and care for our natural world, our students develop a good heart and a strong moral compass.

Highlights: *Lev Tov*—לב טוב—*Good Heart*



- Kavod initiative
- Support from Dr. Charlotte Mann, consulting BCBA
- Food waste, Teva, and composting

Kehillah—קהילה—Community



We believe in the power and beauty of our inclusive, diverse community, where students build friendships across grades, families connect to one another, and everyone can find a home.

Highlights: **קהילה**—Kehillah—Community



- Shevet program
- PA successes
- Alumni newsletter
- Culture of belonging (Keshet, Gateways/Beyadenu, ADL, Facing History)

Mitzvot—מצוות—Jewish Practice

We believe in the power of mindful, meaningful, joyful Jewish practice. Some *mitzvot* can connect us to our fellow human beings; others can connect us to the divine. All offer opportunities to add holiness to our lives.

Highlights: *Mitzvot*—מצוות—*Jewish Practice*

- Judaics Programming so far: Humash program, Havdalah program, Rosh Hodesh program, Fifth Grade Torah reading
- Visiting rabbis

K'lal Yisrael—כלל ישראל— Unity of the Jewish People

We believe in the unity of the Jewish people and celebrate the variety of beliefs, ethnicities, and traditions that exist at Schechter and in Jewish communities worldwide. We treasure Israel and the Hebrew language as threads that connect the Jewish people to each other, to our past, and to our future.

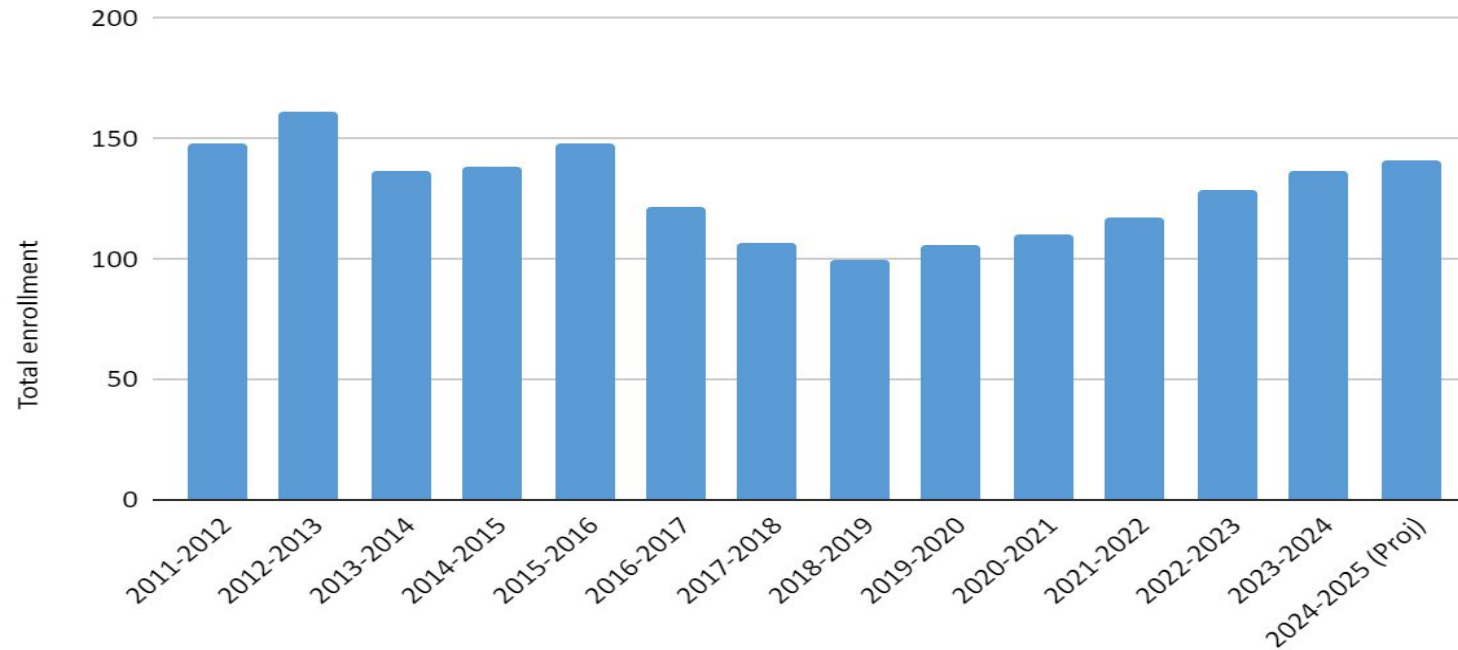
Highlights: *K'lal Yisrael*—כלל ישראל— *Unity of the Jewish People*

- Israel outreach and empathy, and support
- Israel activism
- Welcoming Israeli families

State of the School: Enrollment

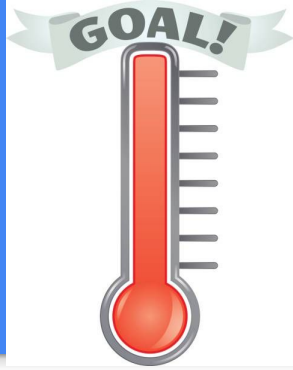


Total enrollment



| Grade | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| EC2 | 9 | 10 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| EC3 | 21 | 12 | 10 | 19 | 18 |
| EC4 | 13 | 19 | 14 | 9 | 18 |
| K | 7 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 10 |
| Grade 1 | 8 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 11 |
| Grade 2 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 14 | 12 |
| Grade 3 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 12 |
| Grade 4 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| Grade 5 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Grade 6 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 10 |
| Grade 7 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 9 |
| Grade 8 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 5 |
| | 106 | 110 | 117 | 129 | 136 |

State of the School: Development



- Two wrinkles with Development staffing
- The power of a committed community
- The results: not just supporting our present, but building a more solid future
- Our individual responsibility

State of the School: Operations



- Technology (especially the unseen)
- Facility: Capital improvements, maintenance
- Security: Mutualink, ongoing facility upgrades, constant (and current) work on more
- Clean annual audits
- Annual budget: tremendous progress
- Small sample outcome: better Tzaharon/Aftercare

Challenges and opportunities (and commitments)

- Particular challenges in Anafim (1-2)
 - Our commitments
 - Our work
- Social/Emotional learning
- Continued financial sustainability and affordability

מחיל אל חיל, From Strength to Strength

- The partnership(s) that it takes to be on our journey of joy, creativity, learning and excellence
- My gratitude to the board, members of the administration, our unbelievable faculty... and our parent community
- Two texts:
ה' עז לעמו יתן; ה' יברך את עמו בשלום (May God grant strength to Israel, and bless them with peace)
ויהי בנסוע הארון, ויאמר משה: קומה ה' ויפוצו איבך (learning and Torah lead to peace)