



**TH**

***b'yachad* together**

**2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**TOWARDS A VIBRANT FUTURE FOR JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS**



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

**“the world endures  
only for the breath  
of schoolchildren”**

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, SHABBAT 119B (RESH LAKISH)

# table of contents

## INTRODUCTION

overview 4

our strategic focus 6

## OBJECTIVES

deepen talent 8

catalyze resources 11

accelerate innovation 14

network to learn 17

## MEETING OUR GOALS

building a strong prizmah 20

financials 21

---

acknowledgements 22



# overview

Educating our children is the most important investment we can make in their future—as Jews, and as active contributors to society—and in our future as a community.

Vibrant Jewish day schools inspire and nurture young people, prepare them for remarkable and meaningful lives, and enable them to truly thrive. Simply put, our schools fundamentally strengthen the trajectory of Jewish knowledge, identity, community, and leadership.

**Prizmah's vision is of a thriving, passionate, engaged, and committed network of Jewish day schools that shape our community for generations to come.**

Prizmah is advancing a field in which Jewish day schools can excel: students graduate exceptionally well equipped with the academic and social-emotional strengths that enable them to pursue their dreams; graduates' Jewish identities are deeply enriched to last a lifetime; families are excited to enroll; talented individuals are drawn to the school's career offerings; and schools have the sustainable resources they need to grow.

With vibrant Jewish day schools, the Jewish community will be empowered and fueled by stronger voices, identities, values, and leadership.

This vision embraces the passion of our schools' leaders and educators, as well as the religious and educational differences of our schools, which we serve according to their individual needs.

While striving for vibrancy everywhere, Jewish day schools face significant challenges. In too many cases, their drive for success, impact, and growth are at risk. The changing academic, social, and technological needs of today's youth create need and opportunity to re-think education.

The demographics, dynamics, and institutions of our Jewish communities are also changing, as are the ways individuals engage with and express their Jewish connection. As the cost of education rises and many incomes stagnate, the struggle to provide an affordable Jewish education to all who want it grows, leading to challenges in enrollment.

**Prizmah exists to support Jewish day schools and communities to tackle the challenges on their path to success.**



## **Simply put,**

our schools fundamentally strengthen the trajectory of Jewish knowledge, identity, community, and leadership.

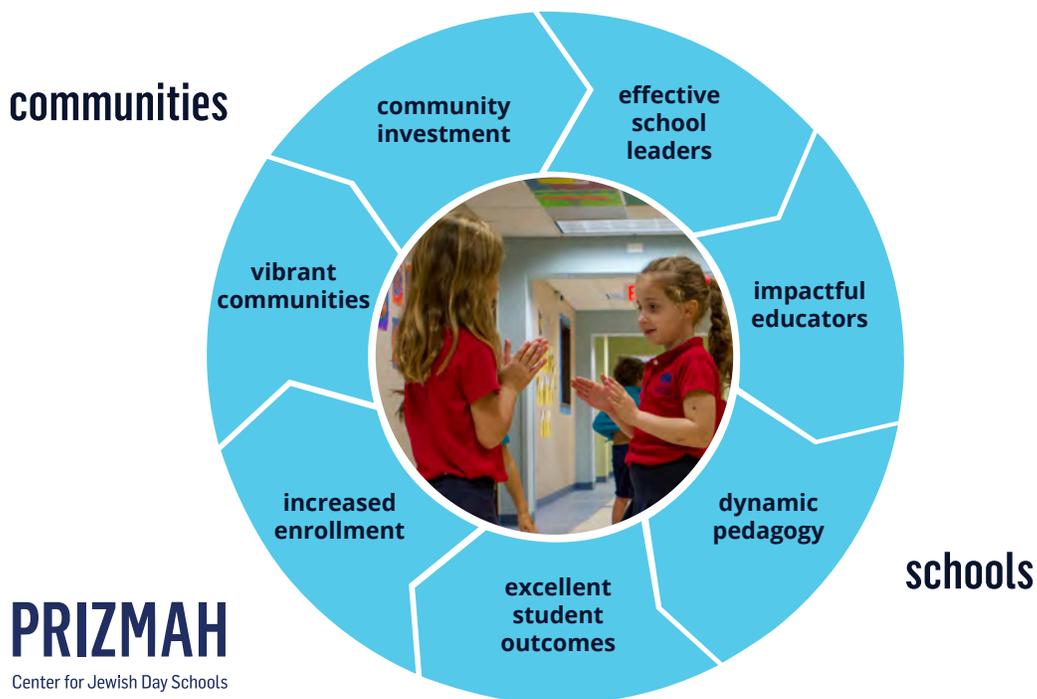
# our strategic focus

Prizmah was launched in the summer of 2016, to help meet the diverse needs of Jewish day schools throughout North America. Prizmah is an unprecedented merger of five of the leading day school organizations, unifying talent and expertise, creating opportunity to work together across the community, and addressing the opportunities and challenges of Jewish day schools.

Building on these strong foundations, **Prizmah serves Jewish day schools across all denominations, helping them grow their reach and impact.**

Our priorities for the next five years—as articulated in this strategic plan—are shaped by what we learned from the field through our work together, an extensive stakeholder engagement effort that stretched across North America, and a research deep dive into the trends and leading practices both in and outside of Jewish education.

Core to our success—and the success of our schools, educators, leaders, and students—is the recognition that schools and communities are inherently linked. **Together, they form a virtuous cycle, wherein investments in the key aspects of thriving Jewish day schools reinforce and embolden one another.**





**Prizmah is making targeted, strategic investments in areas identified by our stakeholders, focused on what we know works to support successful schools and communities: talent, resources, innovation, and networked learning.** Our investments are designed to accelerate the virtuous cycle, ensuring it spins as quickly, effectively, and efficiently as possible.



**1. Deepen Talent** Strong leadership attracts and harnesses the brilliance of teachers and other staff, enabling them to inspire their students and achieve learning potential.

**2. Catalyze Resources** For teachers and students to do their best work, their schools need to be strong and affordable, and that requires significant funding.

**3. Accelerate Innovation** Successful schools thrive in an environment seeking continuous educational growth, in a culture where experimentation and uptake of successful innovations flourish.

**4. Network to Learn** When we learn together, grow together, and create together, schools thrive.

**Prizmah's investment areas reinforce one another and offer a holistic and powerful approach to building Jewish community through day schools.**



**OBJECTIVE 1**  
**deepen  
talent**

We will invest in professional and lay leaders, empowering them to transform their schools into vibrant centers of learning and Jewish community.



We know that talent drives excellence in Jewish day schools. By targeting our support on strengthening professional and lay leadership, we can help school leaders create the environments that enable teachers, staff, and volunteers to unlock their fullest potential and inspire learning and development for students.

## **To accomplish this goal, we will:**

### **A. Lead the Jewish day school field in creating conditions for exceptional school leadership that enable schools to improve, grow, and thrive.**

We will shape field-wide expectations of professional and lay leadership, support the creation of talent development plans at every Jewish day school, and strengthen partnerships between professional and lay leaders.

### **B. Support heads of school across the field to create successful school environments.**

We will deliver the customized supports for heads of school to excel and lengthen their tenures, and will strengthen peer-to-peer networks that facilitate support and learning.

### **C. Strengthen school lay leadership.**

We will promote strong governance and accountability practices across the Prizmah Network, and enable boards to learn from one another.

### **D. Grow the talent pipeline for school leadership.**

We will support the rising stars in our schools and promote their continued growth and education, and we will partner with like-minded organizations to attract more talent to the field.

**“Leadership is a space filled with risk taking, vulnerabilities, and very often loneliness. Being part of Prizmah’s leadership training gave me a foundation that I know will propel me forward on my professional journey, as well as a community and support system I can rely on to work through any aspect of leadership.”**

HEAD OF SCHOOL



### **key outcomes by 2023:**

- **200** schools enhance depth of talent among professional leaders, increasing tenure for high performing heads of school, and growing next generation leaders
- **75%** of schools strengthen the partnership between heads of school and board chairs, and leverage better governance practices to improve school outcomes



## OBJECTIVE 2

# catalyze resources

We will partner with schools and communities to generate \$1B in new, sustainable revenue, supporting schools to secure the funding necessary to flourish.



Prizmah schools generate roughly 75% of their revenue through tuition, which leaves a budget gap that is filled by annual fundraising. As the need for scholarships grows, so too does that funding gap. For Jewish day schools to thrive, they need financially sustainable models that not only meet day-to-day budgetary needs, but also provide ample resources to invest in talent, innovation, and affordability. Catalyzing new, sustainable revenue over the next five years will not only close the gap, but provide resources to expand and grow.

## **To accomplish this goal, we will:**

### **A. Position Prizmah as the leader of Jewish day school support and philanthropy.**

We will articulate a compelling case for supporting Jewish day schools, build powerful funder networks, and coordinate funding efforts to support the field.

### **B. Work with schools and communities to build endowment funds.**

We will partner with individual schools and communities to substantially expand existing endowments and to establish new endowment funds where none previously existed.

### **C. Build schools' fundraising capacity.**

We will provide fundraising training and capacity building to professional and lay leaders, leverage the Prizmah Network to strengthen and amplify school fundraising efforts, and facilitate access to government funding.

### **D. Provide schools with tools to maximize their enrollment potential.**

We will equip schools with leading admissions practices and data to help them optimize student enrollment and retention efforts.

**“We are so thankful to have Prizmah as our partner to help create a focus on long-term sustainability for our school. Through your programs, we have seen financial successes, strengthened relationships, and growth in our professional sophistication. In just three years, we grew our endowment from a few hundred thousand dollars to more than \$3 million. Our board members are eager to keep building on this, to make our school truly affordable and sustainable.”**

**BOARD CHAIR**



### **key outcomes by 2023:**

- **\$1B** in new, sustainable revenue for the field through 100% increases in school-site endowments (\$500M) and communal endowments (\$500M)
- **20%** increase, over five years, in average revenue per school, driven by annual fundraising, government funding, and leading practices in enrollment and affordability

### OBJECTIVE 3

# accelerate innovation

We will foster a culture and practice of continuous improvement and experimentation in the learning environment, helping schools create and implement new incremental and game-changing teaching and learning opportunities that empower students to thrive.





Innovative ideas and creativity can come from any individual, in any role in a school. We know these sparks of innovation ignite enthusiasm, curiosity, and learning for students, as well as passion and a love of teaching and learning for educators. At Prizmah, we believe “innovation” is first about inspiring individuals and communities to dream up better ways to positively impact students, and then about empowering them with the culture, tools, and resources to bring those dreams to life.

## **To accomplish this goal, we will:**

### **A. Foster a culture of continuous educational growth and experimentation at schools.**

We will partner with school leaders to support and sustain their educational vision for all stakeholders, foster a healthy and exploratory learning culture, and proactively connect and learn from the broader education field.

### **B. Identify and scale promising new ideas.**

We will create the space for promising new ideas to shine that can enhance student learning and experiences, scale successful innovations, and encourage donors to support continuous experimentation and innovation in schools.

**“When we thought about how we could achieve differentiated instruction in Hebrew, we turned to the Prizmah team, who helped us with the change. We want every student to learn and achieve their best, across the curriculum. As we learn from both the progress and stumbling stones, we continue working to enhance our teaching and learning.”**

**LEAD TEACHER**



### **key outcomes by 2023:**

- **200** schools articulate their educational visions and goals for academic achievement, social-emotional development, and Jewish identity
- **400** school-site innovations identified, documented, and shared across the Prizmah Network



## OBJECTIVE 4

# network to learn

We will enable schools and communities to connect, share, learn, create, and drive impact, individually and collectively.



In a world increasingly defined by networks, online and offline, Jewish day schools can harness the power of connecting with each other to propel their success. By coming together, we commit ourselves to live out the expression *hazak hazak ve-nithazek*—we grow strong by strengthening each other, by partnering in a community of trust, where we can all be both learners and teachers. The Prizmah Network—a network of networks inclusive of individuals, schools, and organizations helping to build and sustain vibrant Jewish day schools—encourages the sharing of innovative and leading practices, connecting diverse stakeholders to one another, and advancing the field of Jewish day schools.

## **To accomplish this goal, we will:**

### **A. Develop and deepen relationships throughout the Prizmah Network.**

We will foster authentic and meaningful connections and collaborations across schools and continue to host the biennial Prizmah Conference, the premier gathering for the field of Jewish day schools.

### **B. Launch the Prizmah Knowledge Center.**

We will create a strategic and systematic approach to research, data collection, and knowledge sharing of the collective learning and insights from the field to inform, inspire, and empower each individual school and community.

### **C. Expand strategic partnerships with organizations that serve Jewish day school needs.**

We will connect schools to well-vetted expertise and support in areas beyond Prizmah's services, enabling schools to address their full range of evolving needs.

**“The conference offered a tremendous opportunity to network with other schools and organizations from around the country, and hear from experts in the field. Getting answers to my questions and learning from peers thanks to Prizmah is exactly what I needed.”**

HEAD OF SCHOOL

**“As a Head of School from a small community, it can be hard to take a moment to just...breathe. With the mounting pressures of finances, development, assessments, admissions, and H.R. how many moments do we get to learn and problem solve with our peers? Our time at Prizmah’s Small School Retreat and the continued connections after give us the tools for self-care and school-care.”**

HEAD OF SCHOOL



## **key outcomes by 2023:**

- **300+** schools are regularly active in the Prizmah Network, online and offline
- **90%+** of schools engaged with Prizmah report they have access to the expertise and resources they need through Prizmah and its partners

# building a strong prizmah

This strategic plan outlines a bold, visionary future for the field of Jewish day schools, and we are eager to strengthen our ability to deliver on it.

To meet this challenge, we are fostering a cohesive, dynamic, and diverse team of outstanding professionals who reflect and know the schools we serve. We are accompanied by a distinguished Board of Directors with deep Jewish day school and community experience, from across denominations and geographies. Just as we believe the field will benefit from a focus on talent, resources, innovation, and networked learning, so too do we believe the same drivers will enable us to build a stronger organization, internally.

We will **deepen our internal talent** by creating an ongoing learning environment at Prizmah that supports professional growth, development, and collaboration.

We will **catalyze resources to support Prizmah** by growing Prizmah Services (our fee-for-service model) and by securing additional philanthropic support.

We will **accelerate our own internal innovation** by continuing to support team members to approach their work in new ways and explore new models that challenge our assumptions and identify new opportunities.

We will **strengthen our own network to learn** by deepening relationships and connections across all Prizmah team members (as well as to schools and the field) and by increasing our ability to share information and insights across our team so that we are all growing, focused, and building off one another's successes and learnings.



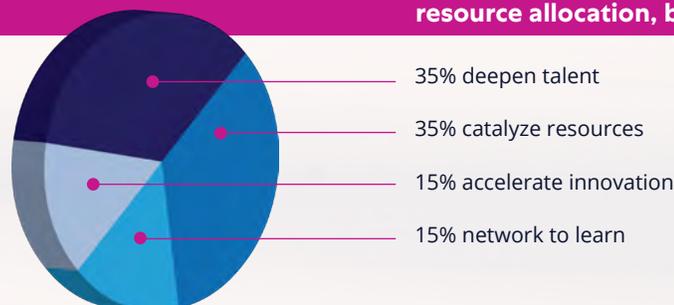
# financials

Over the five years of this plan, we anticipate Prizmah’s budget growing a total of 30% to deliver substantial impact for the Jewish day school field. To support this growth while limiting financial risk, we will begin in FY19 to consciously build Prizmah’s reserves—we project being able to save enough to reach our goal of covering 3+ months of operating expenses by FY23.

The below pro forma illustrates our financial projections through FY23. Of particular note is our biennial conference, which significantly impacts our revenue and expenses in FY19, FY21, and FY23. We also anticipate greater (and more diverse) philanthropic support, a stronger portfolio of earned revenue programs, and concentrated investments in marketing, professional development, and infrastructure.

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Revenue</b>					
<b>Grant Income-Programs</b>	2,862,126	1,900,000	1,675,000	2,450,000	2,450,000
<b>Operating Grants &amp; Contributions</b>	4,065,780	5,395,000	5,560,000	5,100,000	6,940,000
<b>Earned Revenue</b>					
Program Revenue	775,750	592,000	662,000	682,000	772,000
Prizmah Service	396,645	681,270	917,392	1,244,541	1,550,539
Membership	205,000	243,000	283,500	303,750	318,938
Conferences & Webinars	616,500	231,000	1,048,500	291,000	1,256,000
Advertising	23,000	23,690	24,401	25,133	25,887
Other	131,199	1,200	131,200	1,200	131,200
Earned Revenue Subtotal	2,148,094	1,772,160	3,066,992	2,547,624	4,054,563
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$9,076,000</b>	<b>\$9,067,160</b>	<b>\$10,301,992</b>	<b>\$10,097,624</b>	<b>\$13,444,563</b>
<b>Expense</b>					
<b>Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	4,831,548	5,095,462	5,327,565	5,949,981	6,710,343
<b>Direct Programs</b>					
Professional Fees-Direct	922,750	922,750	922,750	922,750	922,750
Grants & Stipends	157,650	157,650	157,650	157,650	157,650
Conferences & Meetings	1,419,883	604,241	1,404,241	644,241	1,444,241
Innovation Fund	-	117,878	179,078	120,278	181,478
Other Direct Program Expenses	499,979	280,000	500,000	280,000	500,000
Program Expenses Subtotal	3,000,263	2,082,520	3,163,720	2,124,920	3,206,120
<b>Support Services</b>	986,189	1,228,664	1,189,364	1,314,489	1,493,190
<b>Marketing &amp; Advertising</b>	98,000	147,000	154,350	162,068	170,171
<b>Contingency</b>	100,000	103,000	106,090	109,273	112,551
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$9,016,000</b>	<b>\$8,656,646</b>	<b>\$9,941,089</b>	<b>\$9,660,730</b>	<b>\$11,692,374</b>
<b>Contribution to Reserves</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$410,515</b>	<b>\$360,903</b>	<b>\$436,893</b>	<b>\$1,752,188</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>

## resource allocation, by priority area



# acknowledgments

This strategic plan was made possible by the support of the Jim Joseph Foundation, whose passion and commitment to Jewish day schools has helped to set a new, ambitious, and inspiring vision for the field.

We are deeply grateful for their partnership and encouragement, and humbled by their generosity.

We also want to acknowledge the AVI CHAI Foundation for their visionary leadership of the Jewish day school field, for making Prizmah possible, and for their ongoing support and partnership.

Our sincere gratitude also goes out to the hundreds of individuals and schools that participated in this strategic planning process, through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and collaborative editing. Your insights, creativity, and spirit drive us and bring this work to life.

We thank our fearless Strategic Planning Committee, who led this effort and poured their energy, brilliance, and time into this project, and always kept us focused on how we could best support the students and educators we serve.

We extend our deep and personal gratitude to the Prizmah Board of Directors and staff, who have worked tirelessly on this project, all while still managing to perform the miraculous acts they do day in and day out to further the field of Jewish day schools.

Finally, we thank our strategic planning partners, Third Plateau and Olive Grove, for guiding us through this journey and helping to align us around a shared and profound purpose.







# PRIZMAH

Center for Jewish Day Schools

254 West 54th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10019  
(646) 975-2800 | [www.prizmah.org](http://www.prizmah.org)



THIRDPLATEAU

OLIVE  GROVE  
COLLECTIVE