

2023-2026

# EDUCATION PLAN



**Halpern  
Akiva  
Academy's  
3 year Education  
Plan for  
Accountability,  
Improvement and  
Assurance.**

School: 9914 Akiva Academy

Authority: 9147 Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

We are pleased to report to our school Parents, Staff, Board of Directors and to Alberta Education the following information concerning Halpern Akiva Academy as it pertains to its operation during the 2023-2024 school years. This report reflects the information that is required for reporting as stipulated by Alberta Education. Halpern Akiva Academy's goal is to be transparent in the information that we share with all of our stakeholders. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that all members are kept informed of what is happening at Halpern Akiva Academy. We encourage you to read this important document. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Best,

Irina Be'eri  
President  
Halpern Akiva Board of Directors

David Silver  
Chair  
HOJMI Board of Directors

## A PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Halpern Akiva Academy was founded in 1980 as an Orthodox Jewish Community Day School. Halpern Akiva Academy is accredited and partially funded as a Private School under the Education Act and provides a Secular Education, which meets or exceeds the requirements of Alberta Learning. The Judaic and Hebrew program follows the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools (Torah Umesorah) curriculum guidelines.

For the 2023-2024 school year, Halpern Akiva Academy will serve 75+ students from 19 months through Grade Nine. The school staff consists of a Principal, Head of Judaic Studies, Director of Inclusive Education, Director of Programming, qualified and dedicated full and part time teachers, paraprofessionals, one administrative assistant, one daycare director, and one maintenance worker. Halpern Akiva Academy has optimal teacher/student ratios in all classes.

## FOUNDATION STATEMENTS

**The Vision of Halpern Akiva Academy** is to provide an exceptional education to Jewish children, by instilling Torah values, academic excellence, passion for learning, love for community and respect for self and others.

**The Mission of Halpern Akiva Academy** is to welcome all Jewish families and to provide excellence in General, Judaic & Hebrew education while instilling a love of Judaism.

In order to fulfill this mission, we:

- Recognize the individual educational needs of each child, and provide strategies for them to learn to their full potential;
- Investigate new methods of teaching to ensure the best methods of learning;
- Teach and model Torah values with sensitivity and respect towards individuals' religious observances and philosophies;
- Provide a meaningful Jewish education emphasizing knowledge, skills and values in order to strengthen Jewish identities, thereby encouraging children to make informed choices about their Jewish life;
- Immerse the children in Hebrew language by ensuring that Hebrew is taught through Ivrit b'Ivrit when possible;
- Nurture the characteristics of "Menschlichkeit" to promote the development of a caring, sensitive and socially responsible Jews who will be a source of strength to our community;
- Enrich learning skills, such as critical thinking, through Judaic learning;
- Foster a lifelong love of learning that will motivate children throughout their lives, developing in each child a positive self-image and high self-esteem;
- Provide a welcoming environment that is open to all Jewish families & foster a sense of community both within the school and the greater Calgary Jewish Community;
- Instill in our students an attachment to the State of Israel and its people, as well as a sense of responsibility for their welfare.



## **BELIEFS & STRENGTHS**

**Our unique strengths include an inclusive and supportive school environment, small student-to-teacher ratios, Montessori-inspired childcare, immersive Hebrew language program and a meaningful Jewish education.**

**Providing Jewish Children with a Traditional Jewish Education emphasizing the knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live as practicing Jews and as responsible Jewish citizens in the world. Providing education and an educational environment that promotes moral and ethical behaviour and religious practice embodied in traditional Jewish values. Halpern Akiva Academy's Torah orientation results in a high standard of student conduct and respectful interaction among all members of the school community and beyond.**



## AN EXCELLENT START TO LEARNING

**Halpern Akiva Academy has a Preschool program for Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten children as well as an afternoon daycare program and a full day Toddler program.**

**These programs boast a Montessori element, and training on this method of early education has been taken by all staff. Montessori is a method of teaching that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. The Montessori approach to education is based on the work and research of Dr. Maria Montessori. It provides students a carefully planned, stimulating environment that helps them develop an excellent foundation for learning and leadership.**

**The daycare and preschool have now incorporated five key areas of learning which make up the Montessori elements: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Culture.**

**Some of the Montessori special approaches to learning are: Fostering independence, Creating sense of order and Hands on learning.**

**Halpern Akiva Academy operates a full day Kindergarten. The students participate in the Alberta curriculum for half of the day and the Judaic/Hebrew programs for the other half of the day.**



### Strategies

- Encourage children to interact freely with their peers
- Listening to stories
- Provide opportunities for play during centre time
- Begin literacy and numeracy skills
- Participate in the physical activities during gym and outside on the playground



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The success and growth of Halpern Akiva Academy is not solely dependent on the efforts of teachers and administrators within its walls. Instead, a more holistic approach that involves active participation and collaboration with stakeholders has become paramount. Stakeholder engagement, the process of involving various individuals and groups with vested interests in an organization, plays a vital role in shaping the direction, policies, and overall success Halpern Akiva Academy.

Every year we are blessed with a mix of students and parents that are supportive and encouraging, as well as deeply vested in the education process. Stakeholder engagement fosters a sense of ownership and belonging within our community. When individuals feel heard, respected, and valued, they become more invested in the institution's mission and goals.

Halpern Akiva Academy values its stakeholders' input immensely and is committed to creating and maintaining positive and lasting partnerships with parents and the broader community.

- Continue to have an open door policy for parents.
- Teachers invite and welcome community members to share their expertise and knowledge with our students.
- Continue with weekly newsletter, sharing details of classroom activities, field trips and events.
- We actively seek parental and student input on a variety of school-based initiatives.
- The parent Assurance Survey is referred to when developing and improving our school's programs to meet the needs and wants of our families.
- Continue to sponsor a variety of events to bring parents and community members into the school
- Teacher staff meetings have been increased throughout the year to collect and discuss teacher feedback.
- Parents volunteer on the Halpern Akiva Academy board, in classrooms, fundraisers, special events and programs.
- Board meetings are held monthly.
- Parent community is heavily involved and committed to supporting many school endeavours
- Continue to hold yearly AGM open to all stakeholders.

## RESULTS ANALYSIS

This Education plan was created using results from the 2022 provincial accountability pillar survey taken by parents, staff and students.

Furthermore, ongoing feedback from parents, students, teachers, the board, paraprofessionals, community members and more is welcomed, encouraged and taken into consideration.

Feedback is received from these groups during board meetings, conversations, formal surveys, questionnaires, and more.

This feedback inspired us to create STEAM-based CTF courses via a partnership with Capstone Engineering, increase social-emotional supports for all students through individual, small-group and school-wide screenings and personalized responses to intervention programs, implemented the new Alberta curriculum where mandated and took the initiative to pilot the new DRAFT Alberta curriculum, we will continue to grow our music program, and more.

For more details please visit [www.halpernakiva.ca](http://www.halpernakiva.ca) to view our Annual Education Results Report.



## FIRST NATIONS, METIS, AND INUIT STUDENT SUCCESS

At the present time, Halpern Akiva Academy has no students declared as FNMI however, we continue to be inclusive in our teaching and resources to ensure that students are aware of and learn about this important history in Canada, as well as modern day issues and opportunities.

- Ensure students in the Social Studies program understand and appreciate the FNMI culture
- Incorporate the FNMI culture into the Social Studies program by bringing in speakers to share their knowledge and history
- Participate in Orange shirt day by keeping it as an in-school day of learning about the topic rather than a day off.
- Continue to use a curriculum and/or supplemental curriculum that will ensure all students and teachers learn about the First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives and experiences, treaties, and the history and legacy of residential school.

## STUDENT GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT

Student Growth and Achievement refers to the ongoing progress students make in their learning, relative to identified provincial learning outcomes and consistent with their needs, interests and aspirations

### Outcomes:

- In alignment with Alberta Education's strategic direction, students will demonstrate increased literacy skills and confidence when reading and writing. A focus will be put on developing practical and transferable skills.
- In alignment with Alberta Education's strategic direction, students will demonstrate increased numeracy skills, specifically in the domain of mental math, and will transfer those skills to problem solving situations.
- Students will participate in real-world and hands-on CTF courses.

### Strategies & Implementation:

- The principal will review and analyze PAT results with teachers to address the specific areas of need.
- We continue to ensure we provide individualized support for EAL (English as an Additional Language) students and for those students on an IPP (Individualized Program Plan).
- Focus on instilling and improving critical thinking skills (e.g. synthesizing information) throughout the school year by incorporating projects and multi-modal learning activities.
- Increase the intentionality of tracking students' reading levels and ensuring those who are struggling receive supports by implementing a Director of Inclusive Education to oversee this.
- For the 2023-2024 school year, math will be taught through a four step process where the teacher introduces a skill, reinforces it with practice, formative assessments, games, projects, manipulatives and other hand-on means. The students will practice and review the skill, and the skill is summatively assessed. This will be evident in year plans and formal and informal observations.
- To further align with the new Alberta Education curriculum, Halpern Akiva Academy has adopted the JUMP Math program.
- Implementing a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) CTF course for all students in Grades 1-9 in collaboration with Capstone Engineering.



## STUDENT GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT

Student Growth and Achievement refers to the ongoing progress students make in their learning, relative to identified provincial learning outcomes and consistent with their needs, interests and aspirations

### Measures:

#### Provincial

- Provincial Achievement Tests have not been reported on for the 2021 and 2022 school years due to an insufficient number of students writing. However, locally marked PATs are used to formulate areas of improvement. Grade 6 students in 2023 will write all their PATs aside from Science, as they are piloting the new curriculum. Students in Grade 9 in 2023 will write all their provincial exams. The percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2019 PATs precovid exceeded or approached the provincial percentages in all of the subjects.

#### Local

- Fountas and Pinnell reading levels will be carefully tracked two times a year to measure student progress. This will ensure we can offer assistance to those students in need and to continually ensure students are making progress in their reading levels.
- Halpern Akiva Academy will continue to develop our math program and instructional method. We believe that every child can develop a deep understanding of mathematics and strong reasoning skills. Students who are requiring extra assistance will be given small group or one-on-one support.
- Halpern Akiva Academy will continue to participate in the mandatory literacy and numeracy screening assessment initiative for students in Grades Kindergarten-Grade 4 that began in September 2022. Results from these screening assessments will be used to identify students at risk and provide appropriate interventions as per the Alberta Education Business Plan.
- We will continue to strengthen the career education programming provided to our students in the offered CTF courses overseen by professionals in the field.

## TEACHING & LEADING

Teaching and Leading refers to teachers and leaders analyzing the learning context; attending to local and societal considerations; and applying the appropriate knowledge and abilities to make decisions resulting in quality teaching, leading and optimum learning for all.

### Outcomes:

- Teachers will demonstrate a strong commitment to life-long learning and in-depth knowledge of best teaching practices.
- A School-wide initiative and focus on meaningful and purposeful technology use to support students in the classroom.
- Teachers will continue to develop programming and resources surrounding the new Alberta curriculum, and the HAA Judaic Studies Curriculum Roadmaps.

### Strategies & Implementation:

- Teachers will attend a minimum of one professional development course per year outside of school-wide professional development days, this will be tracked by the administration team.
- New staff and teachers will take part in a mentorship program with senior teachers and administration.
- One goal of each teacher's TPGP will be related to implementation and use of technology in the classroom.
- Administration will continue to forward information on upcoming courses and aid teachers in finding relevant and meaningful professional development opportunities to assist teachers in evolving as new trends and student needs are identified.
- We will continue to pilot parts of the new draft curriculum in 2023-2024 to become familiar with the material, engage in collaborative opportunities with other schools, and provide meaningful and relevant feedback to Alberta Education with the use of curriculum implementation funding to provide resources and professional development opportunities to teachers.
- Our staff has been trained through professional development opportunities in a curriculum appropriate for North American children to learn HSL. and will continue to offer Hebrew Language within our Judaic curriculum.
- Use of LeHavin Ulehaskil Chumash curriculum, which focuses on independent, skills-based deciphering of the language of the Hebrew Bible. As well, teachers will seek guidance and follow the HAA Judaic Studies Curriculum Roadmaps.

## TEACHING & LEADING

Teaching and Leading refers to teachers and leaders analyzing the learning context; attending to local and societal considerations; and applying the appropriate knowledge and abilities to make decisions resulting in quality teaching, leading and optimum learning for all.

### Measures:

#### Provincial

- Accountability Pillar results indicating measure of education quality and teacher professional development.

#### Local

- Halpern Akiva Academy staff have used professional development days to expand their knowledge of anaphylaxis training, CTF, Montessori programming, meaningful technology implementation and student social emotional well-being. We are striving to expand our programs at the school level and as such we have visited and entered into joint endeavours with other successful schools and organizations. . These professional developments result in a strong staff team that are confident and supported in providing high quality education to all students. and we will continue to expand and grow our knowledge on our PD days by booking full staff team training programs.
- Judaics is taught by qualified teachers who lead by example - demonstrating a true love of Torah. Students become familiar with the services in any Jewish synagogue or life cycle event, and develop critical thinking through text study and in-class discussion. Most importantly, students will demonstrate a passion for whatever Jewish observances their family celebrates at home.
- Hebrew language skills will continue to be demonstrated across various platforms such as artwork, projects, formal assessments, oral conversations and more.
- All teachers are encouraged and supported in attending PD in areas they find meaningful to their pedagogy and are asked to share this knowledge at whole group staff meetings to benefit the entire team.

## LEARNING SUPPORTS

Learning Supports refers to the mobilization of resources (including expertise, facilities, human and community services) required to demonstrate shared, system-wide responsibility for all children and students, and the application of these resources to ensure quality teaching and leading and optimum learning for all

### Outcomes:

- Students will feel that school is a safe place where they are welcomed and cared for. They will feel comfortable speaking to their teachers or administration when they have a concern.
- Staff members will recognize the importance of relationship building in student success and will actively build and cultivate meaningful relationships with students.
- Teachers will actively communicate with families on an ongoing basis.
- Families will feel they have access to the supports they need in order for their child(ren) to feel successful at school.

### Strategies & Implementation:

- Recognize the individual educational needs of each child, and provide strategies for them to learn to their full potential through IPPs, personal goal setting, and partnership and communication with parents and families.
- Relationship building will be a paramount focus and will be discussed regularly at staff meetings and one on one meetings. Teachers needing support in this area will be guided towards relevant professional development opportunities and mentored by administration.
- ECS children will be screened and supported through the implementation of a partnership with Cochrane Speech Language Therapy to provide occupational therapy, speech therapy
- Continue to partner with AISCA to provide occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychologist supports and psychoeducational assessment services to students through Renfrew Educational Services as needed.
- Teachers will communicate their expectations, academic coverage, classroom goals and more to parents on an ongoing basis and will seek out opportunities to allow parents into the classroom
- Foster relationships with Cochrane Speech Therapy and the organizations involved with AISCA's Expanding Capacity and Learner Supports project in order to direct our family towards services and supports as needed.

## LEARNING SUPPORTS

Learning Supports refers to the mobilization of resources (including expertise, facilities, human and community services) required to demonstrate shared, system-wide responsibility for all children and students, and the application of these resources to ensure quality teaching and leading and optimum learning for all

### Measures:

#### Provincial

- Accountability Pillar results focused on safe and caring, student inclusion and access to services.

#### Local

- Halpern Akiva Academy prides itself on being a place where all Jewish children can receive an outstanding Secular, Hebrew & Judaic education while instilling a love of Judaism. Social-emotional student support services will continue into 2023-2024 with a focus on working with classes as a whole through the implementation of Physical Education and Wellness as a course in the new curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade 6. This class combines elements of both physical and mental wellbeing.
- IPP's are created by the Director of Inclusive Education with the aid of teachers and consistent and ongoing conversation with parents. This will ensure curriculum is modified in a way that allows every child to feel successful.
- Teachers send updates to parents to inform them of activities in the classroom via weekly emails, newsletters, blogs, websites or other means of communication to foster the relationship and partnership between home and school.
- Students in preschool through grade 9 will be supported by paraprofessionals as needed once the school and parents have recognized a need and jointly agreed to access support.



## GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to the processes by which policy leaders attend to local and societal context; determine strategic direction; evaluate policy implementation; and manage fiscal resources to ensure learning supports, quality teaching and leading and optimum learning for all

### Outcomes:

- Parents will feel that their voices are heard in regard to feedback and input involving their child's education.
- The Halpern Akiva Academy and HOJMI boards will both be informed about all relevant information regarding Halpern Akiva Academy and will work together to support the school.
- Policies will remain up to date, relevant and meaningful to the current school and governmental context.
- The school will operate within a budget that is feasible and aids the school in remaining successful and viable for years to come, while continuing to provide up to date resources and materials to teachers and students.

### Strategies & Implementation:

- Use Sycamore Education to track attendance and access report cards.
- Parents are encouraged to join our Halpern Akiva Academy board to increase their involvement in school decisions. The slate is announced yearly at the AGM in June and all board meetings are open to the public.
- Create a document for tracking policy updates and ensure policies are updated to reflect the changing dynamics of the school on a continual basis.
- Continue to strengthen the relationship between Administration, The Halpern Akiva Academy Board and the HOJMI board through participation in monthly board meetings and ongoing continued communication. A representative from the HOJMI board of directors will be present a Halpern Akiva Board meetings and vice versa.
- Continue Board of Directors holding the end of year Annual General Meeting that all stakeholders are invited to attend.

## GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to the processes by which policy leaders attend to local and societal context; determine strategic direction; evaluate policy implementation; and manage fiscal resources to ensure learning supports, quality teaching and leading and optimum learning for all

### Measures:

#### Provincial

- Accountability Pillar results of parent involvement.

#### Local

- A spreadsheet will be created to ensure cyclical review of policies. Updated policies will be brought to monthly board meetings by administration, reviewed and voted on by the board.
- Students and teachers will have access to up to date and relevant learning and teaching materials.
- Attendance at the Annual General Meeting and feedback from stakeholders on governance issues will inform this domain.

## LOCAL & SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Local and Societal Context refers to the engagement practices of schools and communities, with support from the broader system, in identifying and responding to the learning needs, interests, aspirations and diverse cultural, social and economic circumstances of all students.

### Outcomes:

- Halpern Akiva Academy will work towards being a part of the broader Jewish community and be seen as a collaborative partner in attaining common goals, with an emphasis on promoting the importance of Jewish education in Calgary. As well, Halpern Akiva Academy will work towards enhancing the understanding and support in Calgary for Israel.
- When possible, Halpern Akiva Academy will work with Western Canadian and American Jewish institutions to provide mutual support towards Jewish education.

### Strategies & Implementation:

- Partner with various Judaic and educational programs throughout Calgary to support our school, students, families and programming., such as Calgary Jewish Federation, National National Conference of Synagogue Youth, Calgary Community Kollel, and PJ Library.
- Community members will be informed of events and other successes that Halpern Akiva Academy experiences via the weekly newsletter and social media.
- Halpern Akiva Academy is committed to continue being present at regular organizational gatherings, where individuals representing diverse Jewish organizations come together to foster collaboration.
- Professional development considerations will have in mind Calgary's place in the Jewish Canadian landscape, and find strategic partnerships to uplift all institutions involved when possible and mutually beneficial.

## LOCAL & SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Local and Societal Context refers to the engagement practices of schools and communities, with support from the broader system, in identifying and responding to the learning needs, interests, aspirations and diverse cultural, social and economic circumstances of all students.

### Measures:

#### Local

- At Halpern Akiva Academy we realize that it takes a community to raise a child. We are proud of our warm inclusive Halpern Akiva family which includes people from diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. All Jewish families will feel welcome here.
- Halpern Akiva Academy is affiliated with House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel, is a beneficiary agency of The Calgary Jewish Community Federation, is an accredited Alberta Learning school and follows the curriculum guidelines of the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools (Torah Umesorah). In recent years, a relationship has been developing between the Consortium of Jewish Day Schools (COJDS) as well, and look forward to fostering this connection, along with fostering relationships with the other aforementioned organizations.
- We are able to offer a subsidy towards tuition costs in close collaboration with Calgary Jewish Federation to ensure all Jewish families have adequate access to quality Judaic and Alberta certified education in Calgary.
- We will expand our social media presence to inform our local and international school of events, achievements, and opportunities happening at Halpern Akiva Academy.

## FINANCES

The guiding principles used in the financial planning process are:

As an Alberta independent school we will once again receive partial funding from Alberta Education for the 2023-2024 school year as do all accredited independent schools.

The budget must reflect the anticipated costs of meeting the identified educational requirements of all students. Brander and Company Chartered Accountant accounting firm audited Halpern Akiva Academy's financial statements. Our major expenses continued to be salaries and benefits for teachers and staff. The reader may access additional financial information (Audited Financial Statements) by contacting the administrative assistant in the school office.

The budget must serve as a planning, operational and control mechanism for results and resources, as well as the basis for board approval of school programs and resource deployment.

Our first guiding principle in budgeting and planning is to evaluate what would be best for our student learning needs. Next, we have to follow our mandate not to deny a Jewish child a Jewish education due to lack of funds, so we have to be conscious of balancing community bursary funds and realistic fundraising initiatives. After evaluating and calculating our revenues, we allocate expenses to meet the learning needs of our students within our budget.

The most current budget and audited financial statements are available at [www.halpernakiva.ca](http://www.halpernakiva.ca)



## ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Education Plan for the Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel commencing Sept 1, 2024 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the Private Schools Regulation and the Ministerial Grants Regulation. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results. The Board approved the 2023/2026 Education Plan on May 30th, 2024.



David Silver  
Chair  
HOJMI Board of Directors