2025-2028 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 2025-2028 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,

Marissa Kichler President Halpern Akiva Board of Directors

Yannai Segal 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 an Independent School under the Education Act and provides a General Education, which meets or exceeds the requirements of Alberta curriculum. The Judaic and Hebrew program follows the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools (Torah Umesorah) curriculum guidelines.

For the 2025-2026 school year, Halpern Akiva Academy will serve 75+ students from 12 months through Grade Nine. The school staff consists of a Principal, Head of Judaic Studies, Assistant Principal, Director of Educational Intervention, qualified and dedicated full and part time teachers, paraprofessionals, an administrative assistant, a Director of Early Education, and a 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 and 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 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 and 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.

Halpern Akiva Academy



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.



BELIEFS & STRENGTHS

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. Halpern Akiva Academy provides 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 Infant and Toddler program.



These programs incorporate Montessori elements, and all staff have received training in this method of early childhood education. Montessori is a teaching approach based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. Developed through the research of Dr. Maria Montessori, this method provides children with a carefully prepared, stimulating environment that supports the development of a strong foundation for learning and leadership.

The daycare and preschool programs now include the five key areas of Montessori learning: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Culture.

Some of the unique features of the Montessori approach include fostering independence, encouraging a sense of order, and promoting 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 to help develop strong social skills.
- Listen to stories to inspire creativity and a sense of wonder in our young learners.
- Provide opportunities for play and hands-on learning during centre time.
- Build a strong foundation in early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Engage in physical activities during gym and outdoor play to support both fine and gross motor development.
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Enhance creativity and imagination
- Encourage collaboration and focus on holistic development
- Fosters a love of learning

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The success and growth of Halpern Akiva Academy extends beyond the efforts of its teachers and administrators. A comprehensive, community-centred approach—one that actively involves and collaborates with stakeholders—is essential. Stakeholder engagement, which includes the participation of individuals and groups with a vested interest in the school, is critical in shaping its direction, policies, and overall success.

At Halpern Akiva Academy, we maintain ongoing engagement with parents, grandparents, extended family, community members, donors, and specialized professionals through events, newsletters, feedback opportunities, and in-school programs.

Each year, we are fortunate to welcome a diverse community of students and families who are supportive, encouraging, and deeply committed to the educational journey. This meaningful engagement fosters a sense of ownership and connection within our school community. When stakeholders feel heard, valued, and respected, they are more likely to invest in and support the school's mission and goals.

Halpern Akiva Academy places great value on stakeholder input and is dedicated to cultivating and sustaining positive, lasting partnerships with families and the broader community.

- Continue to have an open door policy for parents and encourage regular conversations with teachers and administrators.
- Teachers invite and welcome community members to share their expertise and knowledge with our students.
- Continue with a weekly newsletter, sharing details of classroom activities, 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.
- During the November and March conferences, parents participated in a local survey aimed at gaining deeper insights into relevant school matters and concerns. The data gathered from this survey was utilized to guide ongoing improvements and identify areas of success within the school community.
- Continue to sponsor a variety of events to bring parents and community members into the school.
- Teacher staff meetings have continued 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. The board annually reviews and approves policies, the Education Plan, the AERR, policies, and other relevant documents related to the operation of the school.
- 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 2024 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 year, we gathered meaningful feedback from parents in the form of a survey given at Parent Teacher Conferences.

Through feedback from community members, we improved our approach to differentiated learning through further development of our learning intervention program and classroom supports.

Fore more details please visit <u>www.halpernakiva.ca</u> 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.

- Participate in Orange Shirt Day by keeping it as an inschool day of learning about the topic.
- Continue to use a 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.
- Halpern Akiva Academy implements recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and aboriginal history through teacher professional learning and curriculum feedback.
- We support truth and reconciliation education by encouraging thoughtful, academic conversations with students that build empathy and deepen understanding of Indigenous experiences and perspectives.
- Supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

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.
- HAA students will achieve levels of acceptable standards on provincial assessments, in-line with or above provincial norms.
- Students will participate in creative and hands-on courses.

- 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 by incorporating visual supports, assistive technology, small group pullouts, and teacher professional learning.
- For those students on an IPP (Individualized Program Plan), supports can include paraprofessional intervention, designated calming and quiet spaces, sensory tools, opportunities for brain and movement breaks and individualized visual supports such as student-centred social stories, visual schedules, first/then boards, and calming activity guidelines.
- Increasing the intentionality of tracking students' reading levels and ensuring those who are struggling receive supports will be overseen by our Director of Educational intervention. A document is created for each student who received intervention throughout the year keeping track of progress and benchmarks achieved.
- For the 2025-2026 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 will be 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 will continue to use the JUMP Math program and supplement with further hands-on materials.

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

- For 2025, our grade 6 and 9 PAT results were suppressed due to fewer than 6 students partaking in the exams.
- Provincial exams were not written in Grade 6 Social Studies due to piloting the new curriculum.

- Fountas and Pinnell reading level tracking was increased to three times per 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.
- Halpern Akiva Academy will continue to participate in the mandatory literacy and numeracy screening assessment initiative for students in Grades Kindergarten-Grade 3 that began in September 2022. We opt to provide the literacy and numeracy assessments to Grade 4 students in order to better analyze progress. Results from these screening assessments will be used to identify students at risk and provide appropriate interventions as outlined in outcome 1 of the Alberta Education Business Plan.
- Halpern Akiva Academy will continue to offer one-on-one and small-group remedial support to students who require extra support as identified by above measures.
- We will continue to strengthen the career education programming provided to our Junior High students by providing a career expert speaker series.
- Halpern Akiva Academy's Early Literacy Intervention Program has expanded to provide further supports across all grade and skill levels. HAA students identified as at-risk by Provincial assessment standards and teacher assessment and observation work with our Director of Educational Intervention to build upon their emergent literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning. Throughout the school year, students receiving early literacy supports continued showed significant improvement, as evidenced by formal assessments.

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 used 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.

- 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.
- Staff participated in professional learning focused on supporting English as an Additional Language students, along with professional learning centred on classroom management, positive behaviour supports, and relationship development.
- 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 2025-2026 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.
- Teachers continued to use technology purposefully in the classroom while adhering to our new technology policy.

TEACHING & LEADING

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Measures:

Provincial

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

- Halpern Akiva Academy staff have used professional development days to expand their knowledge of anaphylaxis training, classroom management, English as an Additional Language supports, Montessori programming, meaningful technology implementation and student social emotional well-being. These professional developments result in a strong and cohesive 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 and supported in attending PD in areas they find meaningful to their pedagogy, at least one per year, 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.

- 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 students, 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 Your Story Speech Language Therapy to provide occupational therapy and speech therapy.
- Continue to partner with AISCA through the Expanding Capacity and Learner Supports (ECLS) grant to provide occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychologist supports and psycho-educational assessment services to students in Kindergarten through grade 9 through Renfrew Educational Services.
- Teachers will communicate their expectations, academic coverage, classroom goals, and more to parents on an ongoing basis, and will actively seek opportunities to engage parents in classroom activities and learning experiences.
- Foster relationships with Your Story Speech Language Services and the organizations involved with AISCA's Expanding Capacity and Learner Supports grant in order to direct our family towards services and supports as needed.

LEARNING SUPPORTS

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Measures:

Provincial

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

- Halpern Akiva Academy prides itself on being a place where all Jewish children can receive an outstanding General, Hebrew and Judaic education while instilling a love of Judaism. Social-emotional student support services will continue into 2025-2026 with a focus on working with classes as a whole through the implementation of Physical Education and Wellness as a course in the curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade 6. This class combines elements of both physical and mental wellbeing.
- Now in its second year of implementation, the additional recess times have become a well-established part of the school day. Students have adapted to the extra unstructured playtime and are benefiting from increased physical activity, enhanced social interactions—often with peers outside their grade level—and greater opportunities for creativity and outdoor exploration. Introduced in the 2023-2024 academic year, this initiative added 30 minutes of unstructured physical activity through morning and afternoon 15-minute recesses, supporting students' well-being, cognitive function, and overall physical health.
- IPPs are coordinated by the Director of Inclusive Education under the supervision of administration with the aid of teachers and consistent and ongoing conversation with parents, students and therapists. 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.

- 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.
- Ensure policies are updated to reflect the changing dynamics of the school on a continual and annual basis.
- Participation in monthly board meetings and ongoing communication between Administration, The Halpern Akiva Academy Board and the HOJMI board. A representative from the HOJMI board of directors will be present a Halpern Akiva Board meetings and vice versa.
- The Board of Directors will continue holding the end of year Annual General Meeting that all stakeholders are invited to attend.

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Measures:

Provincial

- Alberta Education Assurance Survey measure of Parent Involvement. In Spring of 2024 HAA maintained an excellent percentage of parents who were happy with their level of involvement in their child's education.
- School authorities report the amount budgeted for past school year, the amount spent and the variance between these amounts for operational expense categories.

- Policies are updated and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Students and teachers will have access to up to date and relevant learning and teaching materials.
- A local survey was provided to parents at March parent-teacher conferences to gain feedback and provide insight into further improvements. This included parents who are ot eligible to take the Alberta Education Assurance Survey to give a more complete picture of our parent feedback and input.
- Attendance at the Annual General Meeting and feedback from stakeholders on governance issues will inform this domain.
- Halpern Akiva Academy continues to partner with AISCA and network with other independent schools.

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.

- Partner with various Judaic and educational programs throughout Calgary to support our school, students, families and programming, such as Calgary Jewish Federation, 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.
- 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.
- Halpern Akiva Academy has opened its doors to many Jewish children fleeing the war in Israel. We strive to provide a safe and welcoming environment for these newcomers. We assist families in getting settled into life in Calgary and assist their children in the English language learning process.

LOCAL & SOCIETAL CONTEXT

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Measures:

- 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 forwarded 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 adequeate access to quality Judaic and Alberta certifid 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 2025-2026 school year as do all accredited independent schools.

The budget must reflect the anticipated costs of meeting the identified educational requirements of all students. RSPC Chartered Professional Accountants 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

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Education Plan for Congregation House of Jacob Mikveh Israel (Halpern Akiva Academy) commencing September 2025 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 2025-2028 Education Plan on May 28, 2025.

Yannai Segal Chair HOJMI Board of Directors