



ASSOCIATED  
HEBREW SCHOOLS  
בית ספר קהילתי



ASSOCIATED HEBREW SCHOOLS  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

2020-2025



# INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan was constructed as the result of many months' discussions and constructive efforts on the parts of leaders from our school's administration and the entire Board of Directors. It reflects the school's vision, values, and mission as a community Jewish Day School that strives to be welcoming and inclusive to all members of the community, to instill in our students a deep love of their Jewish heritage, and to offer the very best in academic excellence in all General and Judaic Studies. This is a living document, which may be adjusted in response to emergent circumstances or accomplishments. It will serve as a road map for AHS's leaders (both lay and professional) over the next 3-5 years, to guide us in making decisions that best reflect the school's values and advance our strategic goals.

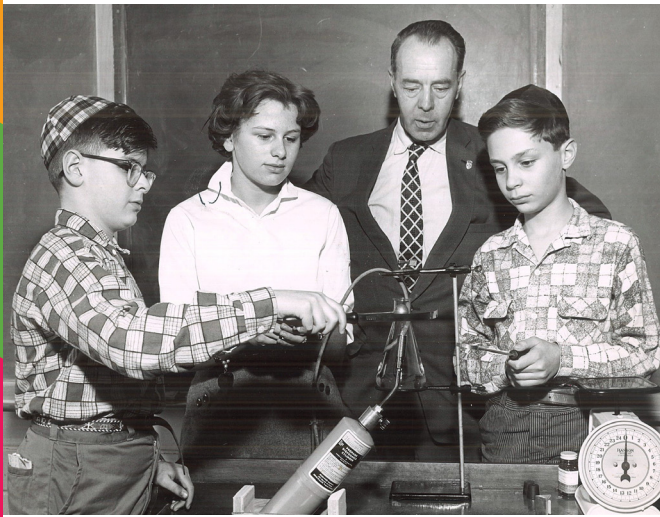
Associated Hebrew Schools (AHS) is a warm and vibrant Nursery to Grade 8 Jewish Day School representing and educating Toronto's diverse Jewish community. Although deeply rooted in Jewish traditions, the teaching and learning methods at AHS are anything but traditional. We nurture a culture of inquiry-based learning and critical thinking while encouraging curiosity and problem-solving.

We take great pride in our history and our accomplishments while understanding the importance of always furthering ourselves as leaders in education. Along with the support of our students, parents, faculty, alumni, and local community, AHS has stood strong, and will continue to stand strong, in the face of an ever-changing world.

# MISSION

To produce graduates with the confidence to reach their full potential, the passion to be everyday heroes, and the pride to carry the torch of Jewish continuity.

AHS is proud to represent a wide range of cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religious practice. Within this richly diverse community, AHS delivers a powerful educational experience infused with traditional Jewish values. At AHS, all students have the opportunity to find their own path to success and excellence within a safe, vibrant, and innovative learning environment.



## A LOOK INTO OUR PAST

Almost 115 years ago, Toronto's Jewish community, led by the vision and passion of Rabbi Jacob Gordon <sup>ZL</sup>, founded the Toronto Hebrew Religious School. The city's first Talmud Torah held its classes in a small eight-room house on Simcoe Street. From these humble beginnings began a tradition in which the community's children, orthodox and non-traditional, from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, learned about their heritage together.

Though the curriculum and teaching methods have expanded, and new knowledge and technology has been integrated into the classrooms, AHS remains constant with Rabbi Gordon's vision all those years ago. It is open to every child of Toronto's Jewish community, regardless of religious affiliation or socioeconomic status. Torah values are instilled in students in every portion of a challenging and enriching dual curriculum, and students become immersed in their Jewish heritage, where they grow their affinity for the State of Israel and acquire proficiency in the Hebrew language.



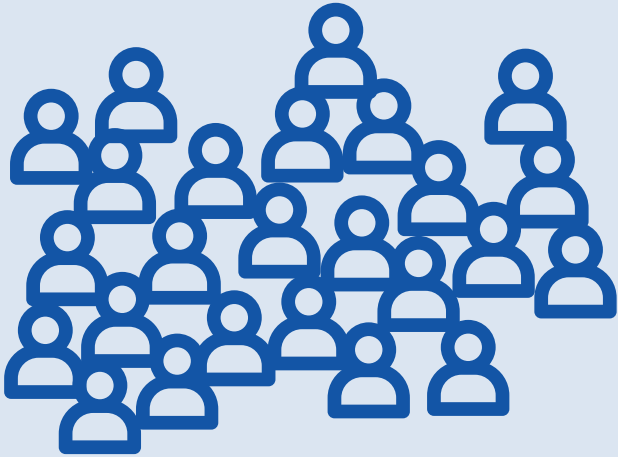
## A LOOK INTO OUR FUTURE

Our vision and mission guide us in implementing *Chinuch Beahava* - Education Through Love. This "heart-centred education" is inspired by our students and reflects the importance of cultivating relationships. To do this, AHS has embarked on a journey of growth and resilience.

Formulating a forward-thinking plan was an ambitious endeavour supported by the AHS stakeholder community. Parents, students, and faculty shared their firsthand experiences by completing confidential surveys, while in-person interviews with Board Members and Principals helped form the key areas for the plan's development. In workshops, teams were assigned to one of four areas - education, enrollment, development, and marketing - to gain a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through design-thinking methods and conducting SWOT analyses.

With a holistic understanding of AHS's current state, the Board of Directors, Head of School, and Senior Leadership Team have collaborated to create a strategic framework that will help shift our focus and efforts over the next five years.

# IN THE LAST TEN YEARS...



1,255  
GRADUATES



STUDENTS HAVE  
COME FROM

53

DIFFERENT  
BIRTH CITIES



16

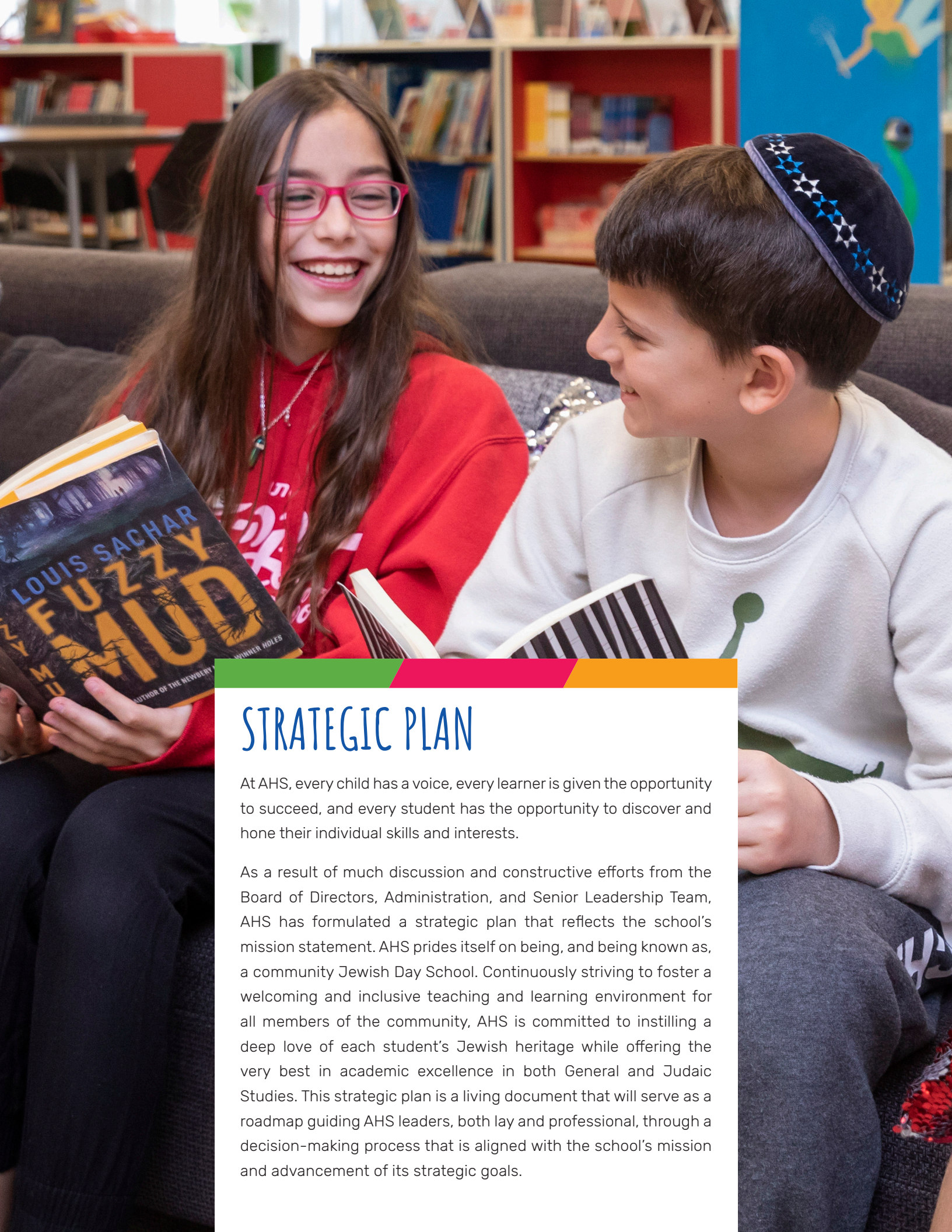
FIRST LANGUAGES  
SPOKEN



96.6%\*

ARE AFFILIATED  
WITH A SYNAGOGUE

*\*Based on responses from 2,289 AHS families*



## STRATEGIC PLAN

At AHS, every child has a voice, every learner is given the opportunity to succeed, and every student has the opportunity to discover and hone their individual skills and interests.

As a result of much discussion and constructive efforts from the Board of Directors, Administration, and Senior Leadership Team, AHS has formulated a strategic plan that reflects the school's mission statement. AHS prides itself on being, and being known as, a community Jewish Day School. Continuously striving to foster a welcoming and inclusive teaching and learning environment for all members of the community, AHS is committed to instilling a deep love of each student's Jewish heritage while offering the very best in academic excellence in both General and Judaic Studies. This strategic plan is a living document that will serve as a roadmap guiding AHS leaders, both lay and professional, through a decision-making process that is aligned with the school's mission and advancement of its strategic goals.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



JEWISH LIFE



COMMUNITY



SUSTAINABILITY

# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



## EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING

- > Students will be equipped with the relevant knowledge and timeless skills required to navigate through life's many experiences. To better prepare students, AHS has designed a learning environment that presents students with the opportunities to put their knowledge to the test and their skills into practice.
- > AHS provides students with the technological resources, the environment, and the opportunities for practice that will allow for the growth and development of the timeless skills and competencies necessary to become critical thinkers, problem-solvers, technoliterate, and responsible global and digital citizens.
- > At AHS, we are continually monitoring and reflecting on the effectiveness of the learning experiences that students are provided.
- > We provide students with a safe and inclusive environment to become leaders of today and tomorrow.






## EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

- > Teachers are provided with professional development opportunities to build on their existing skill sets which are fundamental to the delivery of high-quality educational programs for students.
- > AHS ensures that its teachers have access to the knowledge, resources, and skills needed to structure educational programs in an effective manner that leverages technology allowing students to be actively engaged in learning, explore areas or inquiry and metacognition, develop future-ready skills, and be responsible world and digital citizens.
- > Physical and digital spaces have been created to ensure that teachers and students are offered a dynamic, interactive, and collaborative educational environment.

## MEETING THE NEEDS

- > At AHS, we recognize the broad range of student needs that must be identified, supported, and monitored to allow for an equitable learning experience for all students.
  - > In addition to differentiated planning, programming, and instruction, AHS has also adopted universal design for learning (UDL) within all classrooms. UDL is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all students based on scientific insights into how they learn.
  - > Accessible learning programs and supports, including but not limited to the Centre for Diverse Learning (CDL), are available to help students develop their skill sets thereby building their self-esteem, confidence, and resilience.
  - > Technology is strategically utilized to support teaching and learning needs in all areas of the students' curricula.
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# JEWISH LIFE



## INCLUSIVE

- > Although the notion of community has traditionally assumed and promoted sameness, AHS boasts a heterogenous population representing a range of religious, cultural, and educational beliefs.
- > AHS proudly welcomes students, families, faculty, and administration from all walks of Jewish life to celebrate their shared values and explore the diversity offered in others' backgrounds.
- > At AHS, the teaching and learning environments encourage understanding, respect, and acceptance to collectively work towards building a strong school community benefiting from its diversity.
- > In order to maintain its inclusive status, AHS remains committed to supporting its students and families by lowering barriers to a high-quality Jewish education, including alleviating the financial burden resulting from the cost of tuition.

## INNOVATE TRADITION AND TRADITIONALIZE INNOVATION

- > We embrace and are guided by our traditions by innovatively and creatively celebrating the Jewish calendar, including Shabbat, holidays, and lifecycle events.
- > Developing innovative and inventive ways to explore Jewish teachings in both traditional and non-traditional ways.

## LOVE OF ISRAEL

- > Through interactive learning and programming, students are introduced and connected to the history, heritage, and culture of the Jewish people's homeland, Eretz Yisrael.
- > AHS provides students with hands-on opportunities, in and out of the classroom, to embrace, and be proud of, their Jewish identity.
- > Beginning in SK, Jewish Studies instruction is in Hebrew, Lashon Hakodesh, providing students with the foundational skills required to build a relationship with Torah and the Land of Israel.
- > AHS invites an authentic Israeli experience into its school and classrooms with Israeli teachers planning and programming an immersive curriculum and annual Shinshinim visitors who spend a year volunteering before serving in the army.

# COMMUNITY



## SHARED IDENTITY


- > To build a shared identity within the AHS community, it is our duty to impart, instill, and embody our core values in all that we do - inclusivity, kindness, and respect for one another, and high academic standards.
- > AHS unifies its community by offering its members opportunities to connect and build relationships allowing members to gain an understanding of how everyone can, and does, fit within the AHS community.
- > The accomplishments and achievements of our community members bring us much nachat and deserve to be celebrated.



## ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

- > Connecting the past to the present is the key to AHS's future.
- > It is imperative to recognize the important role that past students play in the AHS community, and we must do our part to encourage, entice, and acknowledge our alumni's continuous involvement with the school.
- > Past members of the AHS community will be provided with frequent updates and opportunities to share and connect with other past and current members of the community.

## THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- > Community involvement is a teachable moment through which students can learn to demonstrate empathy by giving back through chesed, tzedakah, and volunteerism.
  - > AHS collaborates and coordinates with the surrounding Jewish high schools.
  - > When possible, AHS organizes and hosts meaningful events for our students' grandparents to partake in and share their history and experiences with our students, the next generation.
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# SUSTAINABILITY



## PROTECTING THE FUTURE

- > Maintaining financial accountability and stewardship by:
  - > Ensuring that we have the processes in place to be fiscally responsible custodians.
  - > Seeking opportunities to lower barriers to enrollment, to encourage the inclusive AHS community to continue to grow.
  - > Planning with the future in mind to ensure that AHS can continue to provide an exceptional Day School experience for students today and in the future.



ONLY  
HERE  
FOR THE

STARTED

## OUR PROGRESS

As we continue to grow and evolve in the upcoming five years, we are committed to sharing our progress with you.

For updates, please visit  
<https://associatedhebrewschools.com/about-ahs>

## SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

At AHS, we are continuously striving to foster a welcoming and inclusive teaching and learning environment that is open to all members of the Jewish community. We remain committed to connecting each student with their Jewish heritage and identity while offering the very best in academic excellence in both General and Judaic Studies.

The continued support from the community is key in ensuring the sustainability and success of our school.

To learn more about how you can help turn this plan into a reality, please email [development@ahschools.com](mailto:development@ahschools.com).

## FEEDBACK

As we set out to bring the vision of this plan to life, we welcome your feedback and comments throughout.

Please submit your feedback  
by emailing [strategicplan@ahschools.com](mailto:strategicplan@ahschools.com).

# STAY CONNECTED TO AHS



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### POSLUNS EDUCATION CENTRE

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