



The AVI CHAI Foundation

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## **The AVI CHAI Foundation Awards Six Grants for Day School Collaborations**

### **Day School Cooperation to Yield Cost Savings The AVI CHAI Foundation Awards Six Grants for Day School Collaborations**

June 2, 2009 - The AVI CHAI Foundation is awarding grants to six collaborative initiatives across North America designed to cut costs involved in day school education. Day school collaborations are one way to help address the issues of high day school costs that inevitably result in high tuitions.

Back in September 2008, AVI CHAI released a Request for Proposals for Day School Cooperation and Cost savings for the purpose of encouraging new cooperative ventures among day schools, whether at the corporate/administrative level or in the core educational program. Ultimately, the goal was to produce cost savings.

After receiving more than 53 applications from school across North America, AVI CHAI's Trustees decided to award six grants for a total of \$540,000 dollars over the next two years. The funding is intended to cover the temporary costs involved in implementing the cooperative arrangements as well as the costs of consultants, where needed, to help concretize the implementation of the plans.

The grant recipients, all day school collaborations, sometimes with the involvement of the local central agency or Federation, are:

- **Akiba Academy**, a modern Orthodox day school with students in pre-school through eighth grade, and **Yavneh Academy**, a modern Orthodox high school, both located on the same campus in Dallas, Texas, will work to completely merge and integrate their back office operations.
- The **Columbus Torah Academy**, an Orthodox K-12 day school, and the **Columbus Jewish Day School**, a K-6 Community day school, both located in Columbus Ohio, will be working with the Columbus Jewish Federation to develop a staff sharing structure for various back office functions, with a focus on their accounting and human resource departments.
- The **Solomon Schechter Day School of St. Louis**, with students in kindergarten through eighth grade, and the **Saul Mirowitz Day School**, a Reform day school for students in

grades K-5, located in St. Louis, Missouri, will work towards a merger of their business offices and a full integration of their accounting and development software.

- The **Kehila Jewish Community Day School**, a K-6 community day school, and the **Hamilton Jewish Academy**, an Orthodox day school serving students from preschool through grade eight, in Hamilton, Ontario, will join their middle schools and create the Hamilton Hebrew Middle School, offering students secular studies and the choice of either a cultural or source-based Judaic studies track.
- **Donna Klein Jewish Academy**, **Hillel Day School of Boca Raton**, and **Weinbaum Yeshiva High School of Boca Raton**, all located in South Florida will share a Technology Integration Specialist who will work on integrated curriculum development with an emphasis on Judaics.
- The **Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life of the MetroWest Federation in New Jersey** is leading an effort of the **Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy**, the **Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School**, the **Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex & Union**, and the **Nathan Bohrer - Abraham Kaufman Hebrew Academy of Morris County**, to develop an innovative approach to building alumni networks and development opportunities.

Day schools across America are threatened by escalating costs, which lead to increasing tuitions," explains Yossi Prager, AVI CHAI's executive director in North America. "Some schools are already seeing the impact of rising tuitions in reduced enrollment. We are trying to encourage schools to consider ways to take advantage of efficiencies and economies of scale while maintaining their high educational quality."

Recognizing that at times it costs money to save money, and that schools may not be in the position to make those initial investments, AVI CHAI's grant is intended to help schools over the hump. For each of the approved grants, cost-savings should become apparent within one to two years post-implementation, if not sooner.

"We view these six initiatives as experiments designed to yield greater economies of scale that will lower costs," Prager continues. "We anticipate a double benefit: first, immediate success for the benefit of the participating schools and communities and second, lessons that we hope will ultimately reduce the cost of day school education in other communities as well."

To that end, the foundation has started a blog (<http://dayschoolcostsavings.blogspot.com>) where the grant recipients will document their experiences and provide monthly updates about their progress, lessons learned as well unforeseen challenges along the way and how they address them.