NEW NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH DAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION
TO BE FORMED THROUGH HISTORIC INTEGRATION

New organization will support
Jewish day schools across denominations and geographies
Dedicated to building strength, excellence and vitality in Jewish day schools

New York, January 19, 2016 – Realizing a vision of a more unified field of Jewish day schools, five of North America’s leading Jewish day school organizations and networks – Day Schools of Reform Judaism (PARDES), The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), RAVSAK (The Jewish Community Day School Network), the Schechter Day School Network (Schechter), and the Yeshiva University School Partnership (YUSP) – have all agreed to move forward towards the formation of a new, integrated North American Jewish day school organization.

This decision recognizes that a combined day school organization (NewOrg for now, until a name is finalized) will more effectively meet the diverse needs of local schools by pooling the talent, expertise and resources originally dispersed among its founding agencies. The new organization will offer an expanded set of programs, services and networking opportunities to benefit the more than 375 schools and close to 100,000 students currently served by these separate groups, and any other schools interested in participating. Whereas schools today are limited to what they are offered as members or affiliates of one or two organizations, they will soon have access to comprehensive, leading-edge offerings.

NewOrg is committed to improving financial vitality and educational excellence in Jewish day schools, and supporting a vibrant, visible and connected Jewish day school field. It will work directly with schools, cohorts of schools, and individual professional and lay leaders to strengthen skills and build capacity in areas of teaching and learning, leadership, governance, affordability, recruitment, retention, fund development and endowment building. As an integrated organization serving and strengthening all streams of Jewish day schools, it will work on advancing the Jewish day school field across North America as well as on advocacy efforts for day schools locally and regionally. NewOrg will promote greater communal and funder engagement with local day schools, and will work with schools and communities to strengthen enrollment.

NewOrg will take the best of what each founding organization had to offer its schools and scale it for all schools interested in participating. It will network colleagues and schools of different ideologies and geographies to address shared challenges and capitalize on shared opportunities, while still providing distinct services and counsel to schools from within similar streams. The new organization will identify those activities that can be provided across religious affiliations, and, in other cases, deliver programs and services that may be denomination or affiliation-specific.
The leadership of the five organizations have all voted in favor of integration following a nearly 12-month process during which two representatives of each organization, together with representatives of The AVI CHAI Foundation, (“The Planning Team”) worked together with heads of schools, other professionals in the field, lay leaders, funders and other partners to develop a business plan for the continued success of what promises to be an innovative and transformative new organization. AVI CHAI has pledged financial support to advance this work and intends to remain a consistent funder of the organization until the foundation’s sunset in 2019.

In a joint statement, the Planning Team said, “The formation of a single integrated day school organization will optimize the quality of services we provide to the schools we serve, giving them the resources they need to build the strongest possible future. It is a definitive affirmation of the centrality of day schools in Jewish life and reflects our dedication to seeing Jewish learning, literacy, culture and commitment flourish in a rapidly changing world.

“At the same time, this joint plan and decision reflects the conviction of many in the day school community that we can all benefit from the knowledge, expertise and ideas of others, even if we express our Jewishness differently. As one organization, we can unify to strengthen day schools, what we believe to be the core of the Jewish educational enterprise.

“We are grateful to AVI CHAI for its pledge of support to our new organization. We look forward to partnering with other generous philanthropists – institutions and individuals – who are dedicated to building strength, excellence and vitality in Jewish day schools.”

The Planning Team has initiated a global search for a Chief Executive Officer to lead the new organization. The CEO job description can be found at [http://tinyurl.com/gsy4u4z](http://tinyurl.com/gsy4u4z).

The initial board of directors will be built from its current core of one representative from each of the organizations, as well as from AVI CHAI. A large group of lay leaders and donors have expressed interest in supporting and being engaged with the organization and will form the pool from which additional board members will be drawn.

The new organization has also begun a branding process to select the new organization’s name and develop an identity that reflects a unified, cooperative and fresh vision for the Jewish day school field.

It is anticipated that the new organization will launch, subject to the finalization of the formal agreement and necessary state approval, in summer 2016.

Information regarding the new organization and updates concerning its development will be available at [www.newjdsorg.org](http://www.newjdsorg.org).

To arrange for an interview with members of the planning committee, please call Mark Semer or Stephen Rutman at Kekst, (212) 521-4800.

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