

Contact: Donna Woonteiler
donna@peje.org
617.367.0001 x 134
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PEJE Infuses Day School Field with \$625,000:
Challenge Award Winners Announced**

December 21, 2011

Boston, MA—The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) announced today the winners of the 2011 Challenge Award, designed to *drive increased revenue through innovation*. PEJE awarded \$625,000 to schools across North America for implementing initiatives that creatively responded to the day school sustainability challenge.

PEJE announced the Challenge Award at the Day School Conference in January, 2011 with this statement:

Providing a high-quality Jewish day school education to current and future generations of Jewish children is vital to a vibrant and enduring Jewish future. And in today's economic climate, attaining sustainability and affordability for our day schools is the most essential factor in meeting this goal. In celebration of the day school field's determination and focus, PEJE is launching its 2011 Challenge Award for North American Jewish Day Schools.

In all, 127 day schools rose to the challenge, submitting a total of 141 applications for a prize of \$25,000 in unrestricted dollars. In two cases, two related schools implemented the same initiative and will share a prize, bringing the total number of winning schools to 27. In addition, 24 schools received an honorable mention for their innovation.

The review process was rigorous, with each application receiving multiple reviews. Applications were scored based on a weighed formula and ranked by PEJE professionals and a team of outside readers that included PEJE board members and experts in the field of Jewish day school education.

“The challenge for applicants was to think innovatively, to defy their status quo, and to initiate bold changes within their school with the intention of stimulating growth in one of their key revenue streams” said Amy Katz, Executive Director at PEJE. “We were thrilled by the large number of day schools who met these challenges with great purpose. Not only do we salute the winners; we also applaud each and every applicant for reimagining what is truly possible for Jewish day schools.”

Winning initiatives represent a rich diversity of focus area, denomination, geography, and school size.

- Fourteen winning schools submitted innovations for raising annual campaign revenue, 3 concentrated on endowment, and 10 schools submitted applications in tuition/affordability.

- An analysis of winning schools by denomination reveals that 13 are Community/multi-denominational, 7 are Orthodox, 6 are Conservative, and 1 is Reform.
- Geographically, winners emerged from British Columbia, California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Washington, DC, and Wisconsin.
- The variety of winners was also reflected in school size: 14 small schools (200 students and under) were declared winners, as were 9 medium schools (200 – 400 students) and 4 large schools (400 students and up).

“The winners are a diverse mix but they share one thing in common: their determination and optimism. This list gives us a national picture, not of crisis, but of hope, hard work, innovation, and resiliency,” said PEJE Board Chair, Diane Troderman.

Going forward, PEJE will use these stories of innovation to help schools learn from one another, to refine programs of support and advocacy, and to vividly illustrate PEJE’s message of best practice and essential metrics to the Jewish day school field.

Challenge Award Winners

Akiva School of Nashville, Community Day (Pittsburgh), Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School, Hannah Senesh Community Day School, Hillel Academy, Hochberg Preparatory, JCDS, Boston's Jewish Community Day School, Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle, Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital, Kellman Brown Academy, King David High School, Lander-Grinspoon Academy, MetroWest Jewish Day School, Milwaukee Jewish Day School, Oakland Hebrew Day School, Robbins Hebrew Academy, Robert M. Beren Academy, SAR Academy & High School, Seattle Jewish Community School, The Agnon School, The Day School at Baltimore Hebrew, The Doris and Alex Weber Jewish Community High School, The Ramaz School, Valley Beth Shalom, Weizmann Day School, YULA High School Boys, YULA High School Girls.

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) believes that day schools are essential for fostering an engaged Jewish people for an enduring future. PEJE connects and empowers Jewish day schools and major stakeholders in the Jewish community across the denominational and geographic spectrum and offers unparalleled knowledge and resources to foster financial sustainability and affordability. PEJE is dedicated to impacting the field through bold initiatives to stimulate the core revenue streams of annual campaign, legacy, endowment, and tuition and to broaden the market for day school education. PEJE is uniquely positioned to advance the field through strong advocacy, strategic convenings, coalition building, and thought leadership. For more information visit www.peje.org or email us at info@peje.org.