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CESJDS
CHARLES E SMITH JEWISH DAY SCHOOL
בית מדרש צוריאל



Lower School Principal

Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

Rockville, MD

Salary: $150,000 - $175,000

Background



About Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS) is one of the nation's leading pluralistic Jewish day schools, serving students from Junior Kindergarten through 12th grade. Rooted in Jewish values and academic excellence, CESJDS fosters intellectual curiosity, character development, community engagement, and meaningful Jewish identity. At CESJDS, strong relationships, deep community connections, and commitment to students are the foundation of the educational experience.

Located in Rockville, Maryland on two campuses, CESJDS serves a vibrant and diverse community of learners and families. The school's pluralistic mission creates an environment where students learn to appreciate and engage with multiple expressions of Jewish life, and Jewish identity is at the core of the CESJDS experience. CESJDS nurtures and develops confident, compassionate thinkers who approach the world through the lens of Jewish values and seeks to help students develop a strong sense of Jewish identity while preparing them to thrive in an increasingly complex world. Jewish learning extends beyond the classroom, and is reflected in the rhythms of school life, including meaningful engagement with Jewish history, culture, tradition, and with Israel. CESJDS is fortunate to have a large Israeli student-population who are an integral part of the school community.

CESJDS integrates rigorous academics, social-emotional learning, Jewish values, and community engagement to support students' intellectual, academic, and personal growth. Across all divisions, students are encouraged to ask questions, engage deeply with ideas, embrace challenges, and develop the confidence to contribute meaningfully to the world around them. High-caliber academics are the hallmark and foundation of CESJDS, shaping inquisitive, capable, and confident learners. The school offers academics at multiple levels in a broad range of subjects including STEM, world languages, genetics, journalism, Jewish history, and computer science, in addition to the core subject areas. CESJDS is consistently recognized as a leader for its outstanding academic program nationally among both independent and Jewish day schools.

For many faculty members and families, CESJDS serves as a lifelong community. Relationships among students, families, faculty, staff, and alumni are a defining strength of the institution, creating a culture marked by warmth, belonging, and shared purpose. As it looks toward the future, CESJDS remains committed to providing an exceptional education that combines academic excellence, Jewish values, and community connection while inspiring students to lead lives of meaning, learning, and impact.

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Background (cont.)

The Lower School

The Lower School serves as the entry point for many families into the CESJDS community and plays a foundational role in shaping students' academic, Jewish, and personal growth. Sitting on its own campus, the Lower School serves students from Junior Kindergarten through 5th Grade and is a nurturing and joyful environment where children develop a lifelong love of learning. Rooted in the school's pluralistic Jewish mission, the Lower School welcomes and celebrates the diversity of Jewish backgrounds and practices, creating a community where every student feels valued and connected. A strong sense of community and belonging extends beyond the classroom. Through joyful Jewish experiences, including holiday celebrations, prayer, Jewish learning, and Israel programming, students develop a deep sense of Jewish identity while building lasting relationships with peers and faculty.



At the Lower School, academic excellence is paired with a commitment to educating the whole child. Faculty challenge students through an engaging curriculum while supporting their social-emotional development and well-being. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in their teaching, prioritizing exploration, leadership, and students' individual interests. These experiences cultivate critical thinking, collaboration, and intellectual development and are rooted in the Lower School's educational philosophy which emphasizes learning within a joyful and warm community, being values-based, educating the whole child, and being child-centered.

CESJDS Lower School is deeply committed to supporting the needs of diverse learners. Through the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program, multilingual learners receive targeted support that promotes language development and full participation in school life. The integration of the nationally recognized Sulam@JDS program reflects a deep commitment to inclusive education, providing students with learning differences the specialized support they need to thrive within the broader classroom and school community.

The next Lower School Principal will join the school at a pivotal moment. Following the loss of the Lower School's beloved principal, Rabbi Matthew Bellas (z"l), the community is seeking a leader who will honor the warmth, care, inclusivity, and strong relationships that have long defined the division while building on its many strengths and helping shape its future. The new Principal will work closely with CESJDS's seventh Head of School, Dr. Jonathan Levy, who joined the community in July 2026 and is an active, engaged presence on both campuses, building relationships with students, faculty, staff, parents, and the broader community.

At a Glance

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Founded	1965
Lower School Enrollment	365
Full-time Employees	237 across all divisions
Average Tenure of Faculty	14+ years
Endowment	$54M
Operating Budget	$33M across all divisions
Financial Assistance	$10.5M across all divisions
Total Funds Raised	$2.2M across all divisions
Parent Participation in Annual Giving	44%
On the Web	https://www.cesjds.org/

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The Position

The Lower School Principal serves as the educational and community leader of the Lower School. They are responsible for advancing a warm, relationship-centered environment where CESJDS students are supported and challenged. As Campus Head of the Lower School campus, the Principal provides leadership for all aspects of the division, including academic excellence, curriculum and instruction, student well-being, faculty leadership and development, family engagement, Jewish life, day-to-day operations, and facilities. With a visible and approachable presence, the Principal fosters a culture of belonging, partnership, and accountability across faculty, students, and families.



Reporting to the Head of School, the Lower School Principal leads a talented team of educators and administrators, ensuring that CESJDS students receive an exceptional educational experience. The Principal directly supervises nine faculty and administrative leaders and serves as a mentor to faculty and staff, supporting professional growth, and cultivating a culture of accountability and lifelong learning. Working closely with faculty, families, and school leadership, the Principal champions the success of every student, builds and sustains a strong team, and stewards people and resources strategically in service of the school's mission and priorities.

Strategic Leadership and Operations

- Partner closely with admissions, development, and school leadership to support enrollment and retention goals; serve as a visible ambassador for the Lower School and foster an experience that attracts and retains families.
- Serve as the Campus Head of the Lower School campus, overseeing the effective operation of the division, including staffing, resource allocation, budgeting, student support services, day-to-day operations, and facilities.
- Contribute to school-wide leadership and institutional initiatives as a member of the senior leadership team.
- Lead organizational change thoughtfully and decisively, using sound judgment and strategic thinking to advance Lower School and school-wide priorities.

Academic Leadership & Educational Excellence

- Serve as the instructional leader of the division, maintaining a visible presence in classrooms, and partnering with faculty to strengthen teaching and learning.
- Guide the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student support programs.
- Promote a culture of innovation, inquiry, and continuous improvement while preserving the school's core educational strengths.
- Collaborate with colleagues across the JK-12 community to promote curriculum alignment and institutional cohesion.

The Position (cont.)

Faculty Management and Growth

- Recruit, develop, and retain exceptional faculty and staff with a demonstrated commitment to CESDJS's mission and values.
- Strengthen faculty culture and morale while fostering shared accountability and a positive professional environment; advance a culture of continuous improvement and responsiveness to student needs.
- Provide ongoing coaching, mentorship, feedback, and evaluation to support faculty growth, leadership development, and instructional excellence.

Student Success and Family Partnership

- Ensure the continued success of programs that support a diverse range of learners and learning needs.
- Partner with student support teams to ensure effective systems for addressing learning, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.
- Build strong partnerships with families and the broader community through visible leadership, clear communication, and responsiveness.
- Address parent needs and concerns directly; navigate complex situations with transparency and consistency.

Community Building and Jewish Life

- Continue to strengthen Jewish life and learning and cultivate meaningful connections to Jewish identity and Israel.
- Cultivate a vibrant culture of Jewish joy, learning, and engagement that reflects CESJDS's pluralistic mission.
- Ensure Jewish values and identity development are woven throughout the academic and student experience.
- Serve as a visible and accessible presence within the community, fostering trust and strong relationships with students, families, faculty, and community partners.

Core Experiences and Skills

- A strong Lower School and administrative leadership background, including responsibility for academic programs, faculty development, and the day-to-day operation of a complex division.
- Deep understanding of teaching and learning, including curriculum design, instructional leadership, assessment, and child development.
- Experience supervising and evaluating faculty, and recruiting, developing, and retaining talented faculty and staff, including a demonstrated ability to design and implement evaluation systems that establish expectations, provide feedback, and support continuous improvement.
- Experience supporting students with a broad range of learning profiles and advancing inclusive practices that ensure all learners can thrive.
- Demonstrated success leading through change and managing complexity with the capacity to maintain stability, communicate clearly, and keep the community focus on the students.
- Exceptional relationship-building and communication skills, with the ability to earn trust, engage diverse stakeholders, navigate differing perspectives, and build alignment around shared priorities.
- Strong organizational, administrative, and operational skills, including experience overseeing budgets, staffing, scheduling, and resource allocation.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgment, make thoughtful and timely decisions, and communicate with clarity and consistency.
- Appreciation for Jewish life, culture, and values, and the ability to support meaningful Jewish educational experiences and foster connections to Jewish identity, community, and Israel.



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The Ideal Candidate

We are seeking someone who is:

- Student-centered and deeply committed to child development, grounding decisions in what is best for students' academic growth, personal development, and Jewish identity.
- A joyful community leader, who embraces the pluralistic nature of CESJDS, values Jewish learning, inspires a sense of belonging, and helps students, families, and faculty develop meaningful connections to Jewish life, community, and Israel.
- Mission-aligned, with a passion for teaching and learning and a deep appreciation for excellent instruction and strong curriculum.
- A trusted relationship-builder, able to cultivate relationships with students, families, faculty, and colleagues through visibility, accessibility, active listening, and meaningful engagement in the daily life of the school.
- A skilled communicator who communicates directly and thoughtfully, listens to multiple perspectives, and helps stakeholders understand decisions.
- Capable of making difficult decisions when necessary, balancing empathy with accountability, and exercising sound judgment that leads to trust and confidence throughout the community.
- A builder of strong teams and leadership capacity, committed to identifying and nurturing talent, clarifying roles and expectations, and creating an environment in which faculty and administrators can grow professionally.
- Humble and collaborative, approaching leadership with curiosity and openness, valuing diverse viewpoints, seeking feedback, and balancing confidence in decision-making with a willingness to learn from others.
- Strategic, organized, and action-oriented; able to establish priorities, allocate resources thoughtfully, and advance important work with follow-through.
- A lifelong learner who remains current on emerging educational research and best practices.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's required, Master's Degree in related field preferred.
- Experience teaching and/or leading in a lower school setting.
- Experience retaining, supervising and supporting educators.
- Experience working collaboratively with families.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- A commitment to Jewish education.

Key Competencies

The ideal candidate for the Lower School Principal position possesses the following competencies:

Action Oriented

Taking on new opportunities and tough challenges with a sense of urgency, high energy, and enthusiasm.

Balances Stakeholders

Anticipating and balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders in a diplomatic fashion.

Ensures Accountability

Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.

Instills Trust

Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Stakeholder Focus

Building strong stakeholder relationships and delivering targeted solutions.

Values Differences

Recognizing the value that different perspectives and cultures bring to an organization.



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Compensation and Benefits

Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School offers a competitive and comprehensive compensation package for this role. The salary range is $150,000-$175,000. The benefits package includes tuition assistance, medical, dental, and vision coverage, as well as a retirement plan.

Application Requirements and Process

DRG is conducting this search on behalf of Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. Interested candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position
- A current resume
- A 1–2-page PDF writing sample of your choice (newsletter, parent or faculty communication, talk, etc.)
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, as well as the relationship of each reference to the candidate. (References will be contacted only at the finalist stage and with the candidate's permission.)

Application Status: Presenting candidates as soon as possible

Start date: July 1, 2027

Recruitment Fraud Notice: *DRG is the exclusive partner for this search. Legitimate communications will come directly from DRG using @drgconsulting.com email addresses or their LinkedIn profiles. If you are unsure whether a communication is authentic, please contact the consultant(s) listed in this posting.*

Merav Schwartz
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mschwartz@drgconsulting.com

Submit an application

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