

The Silver Academy Head of School

Opportunity Statement

The Silver Academy is a co-educational K-8 Jewish day school serving families in the central Pennsylvania region for over 70 years. Founded by Rabbi David L. Silver, z"l, in 1944, The Silver Academy offers an outstanding Jewish and general studies education to any Jewish child in Harrisburg. Living the values of Achdut (unity) and Areyvut (communal responsibility), our students from Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and non-denominational backgrounds form an outstanding learning community based on mutual respect. In a warm environment, rooted in Jewish texts, values, and traditions, our stellar faculty guides each child's journey in academic, social, and spiritual growth.

The Silver Academy is seeking a new Head of School to lead institutional growth as well as individual growth of our faculty, students and families. The new Head of School will have the opportunity to bring his/her vision to our community day school. We value a candidate with exciting ideas and a deep commitment to Jewish education.

Are you looking to make a big impact in a small community?

As the head of the only Jewish day school in central Pennsylvania, the new Head of School of The Silver Academy will have an unparalleled opportunity to use their vision and creativity to make a lasting impact on Jewish education in this region, while also furthering his/her own professional development. The right candidate, who brings enthusiasm and energy to this position, will be able to implement their ideas to bring renewed vibrancy to our school community. There is tremendous potential to bring unaffiliated families and students into the school, as well as to attract new families into the community. We seek a head of school who will build bridges to the affiliated and unaffiliated Jewish families in central Pennsylvania, through innovative programming and outreach. We are looking for a candidate who is interested in helping a small but historic day school to flourish!

We are a small town community, and as such we all work together - all denominations, synagogues, and organizations - to ensure vibrant Jewish life in the area. Our Jewish community is well established and offers much to draw on, and the school is a recognized vital part of the community. The right candidate will be able to harness the talents of our entire community to bolster our school.

Why is The Silver Academy treasured?

THE FACULTY

Our stellar and dedicated faculty members have served at The Silver Academy from 3 to 33 years! Our long-serving teachers have honed their educational craft, yet are always looking for innovative ways to enhance their pedagogy. Our faculty treasures the small class sizes, warm family atmosphere, educational grounding in Jewish ethical values, and collaborative atmosphere that make The Silver Academy a positive work environment. The Head of School is expected to maintain this collaborative culture, to evaluate and mentor faculty, and to ensure continued professional development.

THE STUDENT BODY

The Silver Academy is home to students from diverse backgrounds, including Mexican, Ethiopian, and Israeli Jews. In addition, students reflect tremendous socio-economic diversity in keeping with Rabbi Silver's mission that a quality Jewish education be available to any Jewish child. Our children also exhibit various learning styles, including those with special needs, gifted, and twice-exceptional. As a small school, The Silver Academy prides itself on meeting the individual needs of each child.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Silver Academy is dedicated to the highest standards of educational excellence. The following qualities stand out in enabling our students to reach their potential as life-long learners with an ownership of their Jewish heritage:

- **Small Class Size:** Small class size results in greater participation by each student, resulting in advanced refinement and articulation of ideas in written and spoken language.
- **Positive culture:** Our faculty actively promotes positive thinking, creating a nurturing learning environment where children are encouraged to ask questions. The positive culture coupled with our challenging curriculum, differentiated for each child, builds confident learners.
- **Active learning:** Children actively learn through participation. Both our general studies curricula and our TaL AM Hebrew curriculum encourage experiential learning. Our students apply their knowledge in each subject through creative projects and various media. This is especially evident in our science program, where students receive comprehensive and rigorous experiment-based training in science and the scientific method.
- **Critical thinking skills:** At The Silver Academy, skills in analytical reasoning and critical thinking are developed from the earliest grades. Students are encouraged to become critical readers in English language arts as well as in Judaic text study. In learning how to analyze other's questions, and in pursuing deep logical analyses of text, grammar, and ideas, our students reap the benefits of our strong intellectual tradition.

- **Values education:** At The Silver Academy, we believe that learning values and ethics, and putting them into practice, is fundamental. Ethical lessons are taught throughout the grades, including training in effect of speech and actions on others, with an emphasis on creating better friends, community members, and citizens. These lessons are reinforced across the curriculum during the school day, with active discussion of positive character traits. In addition, community service is an integral part of The Silver Academy education, where students become accustomed to the practice of giving and serving the community.

The Head of School is responsible for communicating the unique academic boost provided by the supportive environment and challenging curriculum at The Silver Academy, as well as the advantages of a curriculum in which rigorous academics is balanced with spiritual and emotional growth.

Who should apply?

The Silver Academy is seeking a Head of School who is personable, inspired, and able to inspire others to see the value in Jewish day school education.

We are looking for a candidate who will:

- maintain a positive school culture infused with love of learning, collaboration, and respect
- monitor and enhance excellence in curriculum in both general and Judaic studies
- mentor faculty in the use of effective pedagogical strategies
- introduce evidenced-based techniques to promote learning
- work collaboratively with parents and teachers in meeting the needs of each student to the fullest extent possible
- effectively maintain the standards of a menschlich community, and discipline appropriately to maintain an atmosphere of derech erez (respect)
- nurture positive relationships with individuals and organizations within the central PA Jewish community
- nurture positive relationships with individuals and organizations within the central PA private school network, for mutual collaboration and expansion of opportunities for our students
- work strategically to maximize the benefits of budget spending dollars
- mobilize committed volunteers to further the mission of The Silver Academy
- steward relationships essential for development

We are looking for a candidate with the following professional qualifications:

- a record of success as a teacher and administrator, ideally including experience in independent schools and/or Jewish day schools, with
 - strong management and administrative skills
 - excellent communication skills
 - financial literacy
- evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning (advanced degree preferred)

VITAL STATISTICS

History:

The Silver Academy was founded in 1944 as Yeshiva Academy. It was later renamed the Rabbi David L. Silver Yeshiva Academy in honor of our founder.

Location:

Harrisburg, PA

Enrollment for 2016-2017:

Total: 63

Faculty to Student Ratio:

1:7

Faculty:

5 full-time and 13 part-time teachers

Operating Budget:

Approximately \$1 million

Annual Fund Giving

Approximately \$150,000

STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the teaching faculty, The Silver Academy has a full-time business manager, office manager, Director of Development and a part-time Director of Admissions. In addition, our school is served by the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, a division of the Pennsylvania Department of Education which provides extra support for children in private schools. This includes weekly support by a guidance counselor, speech therapist, and reading specialist.

GOVERNANCE:

Board of Directors: Seventeen directors currently serve on The Silver Academy board of directors. These directors work to support the Head of School and other staff in upholding and furthering the school's mission.

VOLUNTEERS:

As a small and treasured community day school, The Silver Academy benefits from the devotion and hard work of many volunteers. From daily help serving the school lunch, to help with mailings and data entry, as well as selling supermarket scrip, parents of alumni and current parents and grandparents provide essential services to The Silver Academy.

LOCATION, CAMPUS AND FACILITIES

The Silver Academy is housed in the Harrisburg Jewish Community Center, a modern facility with expansive views of the Susquehanna River. The JCC is equipped with a full size gymnasium, heated swimming pool and well-maintained outdoor play areas. The JCC is also home to our partner institution, the Early Learning Center, affording rich opportunities for collaboration.

SCHOOL FINANCES

Currently, our budget is approximately \$1 million. Of this, a substantial portion (30%) is funded by scholarships to students through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs. Tuition and fees paid directly by families account for approximately 45% of our income. Our annual campaign currently brings in approximately 10-15% of our budget. In addition, The Silver Academy Foundation supplements our annual budgetary needs. Our school is currently participating in building of its endowment through the Harold Grinspoon Life and Legacy program. As a testament to the positive regard for the school by its alumni and the community, The Silver Academy leads ALL day schools who have participated in this program throughout the country in Letters of Intent to contribute to the endowment.

Why choose Harrisburg?

The Harrisburg area offers all the amenities of Jewish life, including Mikvah, Eruv and school, and kosher food at affordable prices. In addition, we are surrounded by nature. Between the Susquehanna River and the mountains, we are surrounded with scenic views replete with spiritual nourishment. Harrisburg also offers many nature centers, science and art museums, and a symphony. Opportunities for skiing and hiking are nearby, as are vacation destinations such as Hersheypark and Lancaster County. Living in the Harrisburg area will be an outstanding element of the job for the right candidate.

The pace of life in Harrisburg also allows one to focus on family and community more than in big cities. The cost of living in Harrisburg is well below that of most Jewish communities, but the quality of life is superior. We are extremely proud of our welcoming Jewish community, where each person is a vital contributor. The right candidate will have the opportunity to shine, and to build a strong professional reputation. If you are passionate and idealistic about Jewish education, looking for a wonderful community to join and anxious to make an impact, we hope you will apply to join our mission in Harrisburg.

SALARY

Salary starting at \$75,000, commensurate with qualifications and experience

BENEFITS

Include Health insurance and a 403b retirement plan. In addition, the Head of School will enjoy free tuition for children attending The Silver Academy.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates are encouraged to contact Head of School Search Committee Chair Norman Gras at normangras@gmail.com. Applicants should submit the following via e-mail attachment:

- ❖ A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in leading The Silver Academy
- ❖ A current resumé