



WISE SCHOOL



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



Our Vision

The vision of Wise School is to inspire and empower our students and their families to learn deeply about our world and Jewish heritage, to be creative, and to experience wholeness so that we can make great happen in our community, our nation, Israel, and the world.

Our Mission

At Wise School, through depth, complexity and differentiation, our students learn how to learn. Children build knowledge as they ask questions, research, solve problems, and add layers to their understanding.

Through the application of creativity, children voice their independence, expand their minds, and work towards achieving their greatest potential. Students become creators instead of consumers; they focus more on the process than the product. Students maximize their opportunity to stand out in a competitive world by looking at life through innovative lenses. Our students experience wholeness (*שלימות*—*shleimut*), by making interdisciplinary connections through development of mind, body, and soul. We acknowledge and appreciate moments of Shalom. We recognize each student's strengths and contributions as we build an inclusive community. We honor our Jewish faith as a living heritage, begin to develop a deep understanding of and commitment to Israel, and develop proficiency in and appreciation of the Hebrew language. At Wise School, thoughtful people inspire meaningful actions in order to make great happen through acts of *tikkun olam* (תיקון עולם—repair of the world).

Staff Leadership 2018-2019

Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Senior Rabbi

Jen Shankman
Director of Early Childhood

Tami Weiser
Head of School

Lemor Giladi
*Assistant Director,
Early Childhood*

Pam Kleinman
Assistant Head of School

Jayne Rosen
Director of Admissions

Malka Clement
*Director of Hebrew &
Judaic Studies*

Nicole Mevorakh
Parenting Center Coordinator

Rabbi Josh Knobel
Dean of Student & Family Life

Jenna Pitson
Parenting Center Coordinator

Beth Behar
*Director of Admission &
Middle School Placement*

Heidi Sorenson
*Early Childhood Office &
Admissions Manager*

Lisa Mamos
*Director of Academic &
Student Support Services*

Amanda Bernstein
Administrative Assistant

Estefany Garcia
*Office Manager &
School Registrar*

Cecilia Nguyen
Work Room Specialist

Natalie Cohen
Communications Manager

Jillian Moore
*Financial Aid Manager &
Administrative Assistant*

Stephanie Milonas
Wise School Counselor

Sarah Wyatt
*Administrative Assistant &
After-School Coordinator*

A letter from the Head of School

Our theme of “*N’divot Lev*—Generosity of Heart” was truly embodied in every part of Wise School this past year. From our youngest toddlers who learned how to be generous with their toys and energy, to our graduating 6th grade students who demonstrated generosity with their deep connection to the State of Israel by traveling there and purchasing wheelchairs for the Israel Sport Center for the Disabled, we experienced vibrant examples of what it means to be generous.

Every week our elementary school students sang our theme song of generosity, asked the musical question “Whatcha gonna bring?” with great spirit. They each brought the best of themselves to Wise School and we celebrated their many accomplishments. It was with immense pride that we acknowledged all three of our Odyssey of the Mind teams as they won first place in the Regional and State competitions and went on to represent Wise at the World Finals. At another national competition, our Lego Robotics teams also came back with winning trophies. We had the chance to cheer on our sports teams as they won championships on basketball courts, soccer fields, and this year a volleyball final! And we cheered for *Peter Pan* and the cast as they soared over Neverland in our spring musical.

Early Childhood students also learned the *N’divot Lev* theme song and brought their own perspective to generosity of heart. Watching them at the Beit Issie Shapiro farmers market was a true delight, as Wise School continued to support this important program. Seeing our young children celebrate the Passover holiday with their classroom seders, Yom Ha’atzmaut with their shopping trips to our own Israeli shuk, and sitting around their campfire for Lag B’Omer— these were all wonderful demonstrations of their deep early connections to Jewish holidays. And watching them share special moments with their parents and grandparents at Shabbat services was a visual reminder of our theme in action.



Our parents also demonstrated generosity in so many ways! Through active involvement in our Wise Parents Association, parents attended many outstanding speakers, party books, programs, and our Wise School Gala. They donated their time, energy and money to support Wise School, and we are eternally grateful.

As the Head of School, I could not have chosen a better theme to represent how we put our Wise School mission—to learn deeply, be creative, experience wholeness, and make great happen—into action. I am so proud of the entire community, and I know you will enjoy this annual report that demonstrates some highlights of this past year. Warmly,

Tami Weiser

Tami Weiser

A letter from

Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback

As parents, we want more than anything for our children to grow up to be *mensch*s, wonderful human beings who carry in their every action the highest values of our Jewish tradition. A great sage of the Mishna was once asked, “what is the right path a person should follow in life?” In other words, how do we become a *mensch*? What’s the best way to ensure that we carry those elevated values in our everyday behavior? The sage, Rabbi Elazar Ben Arakh said simply: “[Cultivate] a good heart (לב טוב)!”

And what does that mean? Love more. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Ask how you can help. Try to see things from multiple perspectives. Give *zedakah*. Support your friends, your family, and your community. Welcome the stranger...

And when you think about Wise, you realize just how much these behaviors are lived throughout our community. It’s how our staff and teachers endeavor to relate to all of our students and families. It’s how our children are expected to treat one another. It’s emphasized and modeled throughout our curriculum. We weave lessons about *menschlichkeit* (the art of being a *mensch*) into our prayer services and assemblies.



I’m grateful to you for your commitment to Jewish education, Jewish values, and Jewish community. And I am grateful for the absolute privilege of watching your children, our beloved students, blossom into world-class *mensch*s. May they—and we all—go from strength to strength.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yoshi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



A letter from the **WPA**

A day in the life of the Wise Parents Association goes a little something like this: Wise Style is having a carpool sale, while Lost and Found is being put on display for parents to reclaim their missing items, Maccabi Games shirts are being tried on, 6th grade graduation party is being planned, yearbooks are being received, our next SOVA drive is being discussed, publicity for our school supplies program is being edited, hot lunches are delivered, Party Book parties are sold, and flowers and rooms are being set-up for one of possibly three other events that day!

THIS is a real-life example of a typical day—whether you are a WPA Executive Board Vice-President, committee chair, or committee member! The breadth of the WPA is incredibly far-reaching, not to mention busy, and we have been honored to have a hand in leading this magnificent group of Wise School parents who serve on our Board and every committee all year long.

As the new WPA Presidents, we set out with a few key goals in mind—continue to focus on building and strengthening community; increase all parent participation, and particularly among dads; and, focus on Early Childhood and how to create better bridges between the WPA and the EC and the Elementary School.

We are so proud to share that we made great strides in meeting our goals with greater participation in all of our events, committees, and Early Childhood representation throughout it all. In the process, we also raised \$138,000, representing our proceeds from our Holiday Boutique, Party Book, Wise School Gala, and more!

2018-19 was an amazing year and we could not have done it alone! Thank you to our awesome Board, without whom none of these accomplishments would have been possible. And, thank you to all of our Wise School families whose openness and enthusiasm in helping us meet our goals was the real “making GREAT happen” this year!



We are so appreciative of everyone in our Wise community—from the parents to the school administrators, teachers, clergy, staff, and administration, who supported and sustained the Wise Parents Association throughout the entire year. We have been so grateful for the opportunity to serve you and to share our collective love of Wise School. We are looking forward to sharing in another exciting year—making even greater happen”—as the 2019-20 school year begins.

With much gratitude and appreciation,

Ariana and Kevin West

WPA CO-PRESIDENTS
2018-CURRENT



Odyssey of the Mind/ Project Studio

2018-19 was an exciting year for Project Studio and the programs that utilize its resources. Project Studio extends grade level social studies with unique lessons rooted in project and inquiry-based learning. Project Studio is also an integral component of Wise School's STEAM program, supporting engineering projects at all grade levels. Project Studio also provides creative programming after-school through Odyssey of the Mind, an international creative problem-solving competition, and Project Studio Remix, an extension of the core program which provides students with unique challenges.

For the first time ever, Wise School sent all three of its Odyssey of the Mind Teams to the World Finals on the campus of Michigan State University. Having already advanced from the Regional Competition, and having placed first at the State Tournament, Wise School teams placed tenth, sixteenth, and twentieth in the world. A ranking that placed them above thousands of teams from all over the world. Our students proudly represented the California State Association with their dazzling abilities in creative writing, art, and engineering.

Project Studio Remix continues its evolution as one of our newest and most exciting programs. The year culminated with a presentation of original amusement park designs featuring fully functioning scale models of both traditional and reinterpreted attractions. Students utilized a mix of traditional building materials, specially designed components, and electronics. This upcoming year will feature projects challenging students to create an original game design and build an escape room!

The talents of our 1st graders were highlighted as they learned deeply about the evolution of transportation and its transformation over time. They envisioned, designed, and created transportation of the future, that maintained fundamental elements such as power, controls, cabins, and cargo. Using the significant resources of Project Studio, students were able to create three-dimensional representations of their designs. We have entered an age where much of what students imagine and design can also be created and prototyped. We continue to invest in the types of resources that make this possible.



LEGO Robotics



Physical computing projects where students combine engineering skills, robotics, and computer programming are part of the enriched curriculum for all students in our Tyberg Arts and Innovation Lab. Students used our Little Bits, and Makey-Makey electronic kits with Scratch programming language to create interactive game consoles using modeling clay.

Robotics is one useful way for young learners to grapple with engineering concepts and make real world connections. Students use block commands to move motors and deploy touch, light and tilt sensors to solve robotic challenges. Math concepts, computational thinking, prototyping, and engineering converge in the classroom when children are solving design challenges. For example, this year our fifth graders participated in a design challenge to create a better laptop case and presented their prototype at our Wise School Shark Tank Show.



This past year, 3 Lego Robotics teams participated in the Southern California FLL Jr. Expo at Legoland in Carlsbad, CA. One of our teams went on to attend the FIRST World Championship Expo which took place in Houston, TX over spring break. This team took home the Creative Model Award for demonstrating to a team of judges how cooperating with each other helped them to build a successful moon station.



STEAM

What makes STEAM different from STEM?



STEM? The A is for ART! At Wise School, Art is interwoven throughout all disciplines, especially in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The enthusiasm of our students, faculty and parents has led STEAM to become an important focus in Wise School's curriculum. Over the last few years, Wise School's science program has continued to inspire scientific thinking amongst our young Wise scientists. Our Science specialists, Ally Coatney and Mandy Snyder (who also holds a Master's Degree in STEAM Education), work hard to continually align the curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards.

A large part of this alignment has been the implementation of various engineering design challenges across the grade levels that tie into the physical, earth, and life sciences. Project Studio supports the engineering component of our program. With the guidance of Project Studio Teacher, Jason Meth, an ever expanding library of building materials and an expansive workshop, this one-of-a-kind Maker Space facilitates amazing student work.

Additionally, Jan Navah, our Art Specialist, is always available to teachers and students to provide materials (often recycled), suggestions for their appropriate use in each project, and help planning ideas and challenges.

Students were introduced to "Innovation Nation," a workshop based on the extraordinary inventions created by Israelis to help solve problems in the medical field. Along with Jan Navah, our Technology Specialist, Judy Hoffman, helps guide students to create original content and problem solve. The Tyberg Arts and Innovation Lab serves as a state-of-the-art learning space with the flexibility to open a folding wall to accommodate an entire grade to collaborate and create with technology and art at the same time. We have a Math Investigations Program in DK, an enVision math program in K-5, and a middle school Math Innovations Program in grade 6. All our math programs teach students how to master computational skills, problem-solving techniques, logical reasoning, and real life applications of concepts learned.

In March, we held our Annual STEAM Day, where students participated in fun Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities that connected with their science curriculum in many ways. We kicked off the day with a very engaging Mad Science presentation, a woodworking engineering project hosted by the Rediscover Center, an astronomy dome experience led by the California Science Center, a visit from some of the animals at the Wildlife Learning Center, and Robotics challenges led by our very own Judy Hoffman.



Wise Learning Process



Wise School is a proud recipient of the 5-Star Award given by the California Association for the Gifted. We fundamentally believe that all children have the capacity, creativity and curiosity to engage in gifted education. Our students receive cutting edge instruction benefitting all levels of learners across the disciplines. Our **Wise Learning Process**, developed through our partnership with the USC Rossier School of Education, is at the core of our academic excellence and continues to develop in its eighth year. Our ongoing partnership with **Dr. Sandra Kaplan** of the USC Rossier School of Education and the Wise Learning Process have continued to create an atmosphere of academic excellence and a growth mindset towards higher-level learning. We organize units and lessons around universal themes and big ideas in order to provide a more global perspective on the content and to allow for interdisciplinary connections. We believe that learning the skills of critical and creative thinking and applying them across the disciplines is essential to succeed in the unknown jobs of the future.



In this year's spring musical, the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students' creativity soared through the sky with our production of *Peter Pan!* From the inspirational opening number, "Believe," to the uplifting crowd favorite, "Never Neverland," the cast stunned audiences with their energy and imagination.

Our **Spring and Winter Music Festival** once again included stellar performances by our students in Primary Choir, Glee Club, Orchestra, Rock Band, and the cast of *Peter Pan*. Additionally, we saw performances from our 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th grade classes, as they introduced our pilot program to include the school community in our Music Festivals.

Our **Wise Music Academy Private Instrumental Instruction** program continued to deliver expert tutelage in violin, piano, percussion, voice, and guitar. All our wonderful musicians gave two extraordinary recitals, in the winter and spring, demonstrating their accomplishments in their study.

Performing Arts

During class time, our students also made bold strides in their weekly **Music Innovation Lab** classes. Pre-K through 1st grade explored movement and song experiences,

while 2nd through 6th grade students continued their music education using the computer-based **Music Ace Maestro** program. Music appreciation units exposed them to the history of music, the great composers of old, and revolutionary artists of the present. Our 1st and 2nd graders began their introduction to playing an instrument, as they learned to play the recorder. As part of our **4th Grade Music Instrument Study Program**, students chose an instrument to learn under the mentorship of our professional staff.

They gave a brilliant recital in March, which inspired many to continue on with their own personal music study. 5th and 6th graders continued their study of the guitar, allowing them to play and create songs independently. 6th graders had the opportunity to explore creating music to video as part of our Electronic Music Technology Curriculum. All of our students participated in their Grade Level Programs, which combine an essential learning element, presented theatrically, through performance and music. Students participated in their Grade Level Shabbat Services, leading our temple community in song and prayer. Our T'filah program, where we all combine music and prayer, creating a spiritual space where all can find a meaningful, mindful place within themselves.





Athletics

Our Wildcat athletes completed another very successful year. We celebrated seven San Fernando Valley League championships along with three finalist teams! This year was extra special as we won the first ever SFVPSL 6th Grade Boys Volleyball division in the spring. We are so proud of the 119 4th-6th grade students who demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship while competing for the Wildcats against our independent school rivals. An impressive 93% of our 4th-6th grade students participated on at least one of our 34 teams in our competitive athletic program, which contributed to their development of mind, body and soul. We continued our Aquatics program with a swim team, after school swim lessons for K through 6th grade students, as well as incorporating swimming as part of the PE instructional day for the entire elementary school.





Wise School's Early Childhood provides children from birth through five years with an innovative, educational experience tailored to the needs and expression of the whole child in an inclusive Jewish community. Partnered with the USC's Rossier School of Education in a groundbreaking curriculum written exclusively for Wise that brings developmentally appropriate critical and creative thinking skills to the forefront, we strengthen the educational bridge to kindergarten with sound social, emotional, and academic foundations for confidence and success. In each class and at every age, our approach to education is through the lens of a constructivist

Early Childhood

philosophy, and emergent curriculum focusing on hands-on, experiential learning that sparks curiosity, fosters creativity and encourages children to think deeply, imaginatively and critically as they explore their classroom environment and unravel the challenges that arise through their work and their play.



Wise School Early Childhood continued our unique Hebrew Immersion program with full classes in both the Explorer and Pre-K grade levels this year. Scientific research in early childhood brain development indicates that children who are exposed to learning a second

Hebrew Immersion

language between the ages of three to five are more successful in learning and internalizing that language, as well as other

languages, mathematics, and music. Students enrolled in this program attend five days per week for a five-hour day. To maintain the integrity of the program, all content is taught exclusively in Hebrew by native, Hebrew speaking, early childhood teachers.



Community

Our strong sense of community is the heart of our school, and the connections formed at an early age last a lifetime. Through Shabbat dinners, grade-level coffees and socials, and party book events, our families have opportunities to come together both on and off campus. These connections go deep, including multigenerational programs such as Midor L'dor, where grandparents and family members share our sense of community. Our dedicated parent body, teachers, and administrators form the bonds that make great happen. These connections to community and Judaism, formed at an early age in our Parenting Center and Early Childhood classes, and deepened through shared experiences in the upper grades and beyond through our alumni network, truly enrich our families' lives.



823

tissues were used by parents and grandparents at our Pre-K Graduation

100%

of our 6th students were admitted into a highly selective middle school

\$8,429

was raised for the Israeli Sport Center for the Disabled to purchase 3 high performance athletic wheelchairs

WISE SCHOOL by the Numbers

187 hypotheses were proved/disproved at our Science Fair

191

Early Childhood students who were Shabbat Ema and Shabbat Abba

162

Israeli flags were on display during Yom Ha'atzmaut

270 high-fives were shared at the winning boys volleyball championship game

6,100

sight words were learned by our kindergarten students

800+

parents attended the Parent Wise Speaker Series

7

subject areas our 5th grade students outperformed their private school peers on the ERB exam



6th Grade Graduates

We are so proud of our 6th grade graduates who were accepted to the following schools for the fall of 2019:

Brentwood

Buckley

Campbell Hall

Geffen

Harvard-Westlake

Heschel

Marlborough

Milken

Mirman

Sinai Akiba

Viewpoint

Winward

Class of 2013 Graduates

Congratulations to Wise School's class of 2013, who are heading off to the following universities:

American University of Paris

Colby College

Duke University

Emory University

New York University

Pierce College

Tufts University

Tulane University

Santa Monica College

University of Arizona

University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Los Angeles

University of California, San Diego

University of California, Santa Barbara

University of Miami

University of Michigan

University of Pennsylvania

University of Southern California

Washington University in St. Louis

Yale University



Year in Review





3.



6.



7.

- 1. The kindergarten students led the Hagigat HaTorah assembly, where they received their very own mini Torah which they will cherish forever. Everybody was so excited to witness this memorable occasion!
- 2. A record-breaking 131 Wise School students from all grade levels were recognized for their achievements in reading at the Library Awards Assembly. This was our largest group to ever reach the achievement of reading multiple selections of Caldecott, Newberry, and Sydney Taylor award winning books.
- 3. The 4th grade students made their way to Sacramento where they mined for gold, spent time at the Railroad Museum and visited the Capitol Building to observe a bill being passed. They also got a surprise invitation to go into the governor's office!

- 4. In celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, students visited our shuk and spent their shekels on different Israeli foods. They continued the celebration with dancing and songs!
- 5. Our Pre-K students celebrated Lag B'Omer with a "bonfire" and barbecue. They also sang songs with Cantor Emma Lutz and Rabbi Josh Knobel.
- 6. Our youngest Wise School students are getting hands-on experience in one of the many Parenting Center classes.
- 7. Mazal Tov to our beloved 6th grade teacher, Patty Tanner, who was honored with the prestigious Milken Jewish Educator Award at a ceremony last year, recognizing her as among the best of the best in Jewish day school education.



Alumni Spotlight



Sasha Sivan Bortnik (Class of 2002)

What did you love most about your college experience? What I loved most about The University of Arizona, was writing for the school paper, *The Daily Wildcat*, and creating meaningful and sometimes challenging connections with new people who helped me better understand the world from various perspectives.

What did you learn at Wise that helped you succeed in life after school? At Wise I learned the importance of community. The community I have today is largely due to my experience at Wise and is hugely important to both my professional and personal success.

If you could give advice to Wise 6th graders before they graduate, what would you tell them? My advice would be to not be afraid. Try a sport, take a class, sign up for a club, just try whatever intrigues you! I would also say to confide in the people who care and love about you and not to bottle up your feelings :).

If you could choose one teacher from Wise to thank for preparing you for your high school years and beyond, who would it be and why? My kindergarten teacher, Ms. Norwood. Ms. Norwood taught me a lot by example. Her kindness, compassion, willingness to listen and genuine interest in her students made me feel valued, and showed me how important it is to exercise each of those qualities no matter who you're interacting with.



Tola Schwarz (Class of 2019)

What are you most excited about at your new school? I get to make new friends and have more freedom to express myself more by wearing my choice of clothes. Also I love the fact that I can choose my own electives and get to study the things that I want.

What did you love most about Wise School? I made great friendships and amazing memories that will last my lifetime.

If you could give advice to Wise 6th graders before they graduate, what would you tell them? Don't do things just because other people will think you are cool. Be your own person and be different and unique. Manage your time wisely and study for your tests.

If you could choose one teacher from Wise to thank for preparing you for your high school years and beyond, who would it be and why? Ms. Shpall because she taught us important life lessons in our advisory class, such as dealing with peer pressure and responsibility and time management.



Alina Benun (Class Of 2009)

What do you love most about your college? I love the beautiful campus that is a part of the capital of Wisconsin. I also love the community I was a part of on the campus!

What did you learn at Wise that helped you succeed in high school? The teachers I learned from taught me that drive and determination allow you to achieve any goal you set for yourself. This lesson applies to my everyday life.

If you could give advice to Wise 6th graders before they graduate, what would you tell them? Listen to your teachers because they really know a lot and have a lot of knowledge to share with you. If you work as hard as you can, there isn't a goal you can't achieve and it will all be worth it in the long run.

If you could choose one teacher from Wise to thank for preparing you for your high school years and beyond, who would it be and why? I would thank Mrs. Frost because she always listened to anything I was feeling or experiencing. She allowed me to realize it's okay to make mistakes because they help you learn and grow.



Blake Asherian (Class Of 2008)

What did you love most about your high school? I loved the community and the people I was surrounded by at Milken. I met some of my closest friends that I know will forever be my family! I also loved the teachers at Milken because they all strive to see their students succeed!

What did you learn at Wise School that helped you succeed in high school? At Wise, I learned the importance of working as a team and collaborating with my classmates. This lesson applied to many of my high school projects because I learned that a greater outcome can be produced when classmates combine their intelligence in an effort to collaborate.

If you could give advice to Wise 6th graders before they graduate, what would you tell them? I would tell them that in middle school, it's important that they apply themselves and put an effort into learning new things. Middle school is a time of self-discovery where they can explore different interests and passions. In high school, they can continue fostering and developing these talents and interests.

If you could choose one teacher from Wise to thank for preparing you for your high school years and beyond, who would it be and why? Ms. Volterra was the most supportive and influential teacher I have ever had. She was always willing to help me in any situation, teach me new things, and guide me in the correct direction. I'm so grateful she was my teacher and I'll never forget the positive impact she had on my life.



LEARN *deeply*
BE *creative*
EXPERIENCE *wholeness*
MAKE *great* HAPPEN

WISESCHOOL

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