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E D U C A T I O N A L L E A D E R S H I P  
O P P O R T U N I T Y :



H E A D O F S C H O O L



FOR A POSITION TO BEGIN IN JULY 2012, ROCKWERN ACADEMY IS SEEKING A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER – IDEALLY ONE WITH A DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO AND EXPERIENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION.

THE SCHOOL NEEDS A DYNAMIC LEADER WITH EXCEPTIONAL INTERPERSONAL QUALITIES AND WELL-DEVELOPED SKILLS IN BOTH THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

Rockwern Academy is greater Cincinnati's pluralistic Jewish community day school, serving families from across the spectrum of Jewish life. The school integrates Jewish values, history, and culture into a rich general and Judaic curriculum that fosters a passion for lifelong learning, a strong Jewish identity, and a connection to Israel. Within a close-knit and nurturing environment, Rockwern promotes intellectual engagement, academic achievement, and social responsibility.

Founded in 1952 as Yavneh Day School, the school was renamed in 2008 to honor Dr. Samuel S. Rockwern, who created the Rockwern Charitable Foundation, which established a \$4 million endowment fund to help secure the Academy's future. The Academy is an integral link in the web of active organizations that support and sustain Cincinnati's vibrant Jewish community.

Located in the Kenwood neighborhood of Cincinnati, Rockwern Academy's spacious and well-equipped campus can accommodate more than 400 students. In 2010-11, 190 children were enrolled in preschool-grade 6.

*On the web: [www.rockwernacademy.org](http://www.rockwernacademy.org)*



## ROCKWERN ACADEMY AT A GLANCE

**Founded:** 1952, as Yavneh Day School

**Location:** 125,000-square-foot campus  
in Sycamore Township

**Enrollment, 2010-11:** 190  
Preschool: 68  
Elementary: 122

**Faculty:** 13 full-time, 10 part-time

**Average faculty tenure:** 22 years

**Endowment:** \$1 million

**Operating budget:** \$3.1 million

**Indebtedness:** \$1 million

**Annual giving funds raised, 2010-11:**  
\$145,525

**Parent participation in annual giving:**  
23%:

**2010-11 annual tribute dinner:**  
\$279,808

**Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati  
grant:** \$1.5 million

**Tuition, 2010-11:** \$3,850-\$12,000

**Financial aid awarded:** \$590,000

**% of students receiving aid:** 37%

**Member:** RAVSAK; partner agency of  
the Cincinnati Jewish Federation

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Rockwern Academy is Greater Cincinnati's Jewish Community Day School, serving children and their families from across the spectrum of Jewish life. We integrate Jewish values, history, literacy, and culture into a rich general and Judaic curriculum which fosters a passion for lifelong learning, a strong Jewish identity, and a connection to Israel. Our nurturing educational community creates opportunities for leaders to emerge. Rockwern students are intellectually engaged, spiritually aware, and socially responsible.*

## CORE VALUES

### ZEDEK – JUSTICE

Rockwern Academy helps each student develop a powerful voice of change, sense of purpose, and passion for justice. By nurturing these qualities, we educate our students to develop empathy for others, energy for activism, and a lifelong desire for improving the world. These qualities empower Rockwern students to make a difference in the world around them, both in their home community and afar.

### KAVOD – RESPECT

At Rockwern Academy we develop the capacities of trust, honesty, and care between

- An individual and him/herself (*bein adam l'atzmo*)
- An individual and others (*bein adam l'chavero*)
- An individual and G-d (*bein adam l'makom*)
- An individual and the environment around him/her (*bein adam l'svivo*).

### B'TZELEM ELOKIM – IN THE IMAGE OF G-D

There is within each person an eternal spark that has the potential to be ignited. At Rockwern Academy, as we see the unique strengths of each child unfold, it is our responsibility to recognize and nurture those strengths; to stoke the fire so that each spark becomes a strong and steady flame. That flame in turn enables us to reach up and out.

### AHAVAT YISRAEL – LOVE OF ISRAEL

It is our goal to help form an inextricable bond with the Jewish people – past, present, and future – and to foster a sense of pride and commitment to the State of Israel: its people, its language, and its land.

### LIMUD – LEARNING

Our goal is for each child to love learning as a lifetime pursuit.

## SIGNATURE STRENGTHS AND DEFINING QUALITIES OF THE SCHOOL

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Asked to describe the features that make Rockwern Academy unique, members of the school community consistently cite four key elements:

1. A warm and loving environment in which each child is supported and nurtured by a caring faculty who reflect the school's core values of achievement, integrity, enrichment, connection, and service to others.
2. Strong and positive parent involvement in the life of the school, creating a family atmosphere that reinforces the efforts of the faculty.
3. The school's deliberate embrace of and respect for the diversity of Jewish thought and practice.
4. Academic excellence in both general studies and the Judaic program.



The school's faculty – with an average length of service of 22 years – is deeply dedicated and loyal. This year, the faculty includes 13 full-time and 10 part-time teachers. All are certified and one-quarter hold advanced degrees. In addition to classroom teachers, the faculty includes a guidance counselor, a speech pathologist, a nurse, a remedial teacher, and media center staff.

The Rockwern Academy PTO supports the school in numerous ways, including raising funds, developing educational programs, and fostering a strong sense of community among Rockwern families. The PTO also maintains a lively Facebook page with information about and photos of school activities.

Among Rockwern's greatest assets is Cincinnati's longstanding Jewish culture and the robust network of Jewish organizations within the community that sustain and enrich one another. The community draws inspiration from Cincinnati's unique history as a birthplace of seminal Jewish ideas and institutions, including the Hebrew Union College, the first Jewish Federation in the Country, the *American Israelite* (first Jewish newspaper), and the beautiful and historic Isaac Mayer Wise Plum Street Temple. Today, Cincinnati occupies an important position as a national leader of innovation in Jewish life. It is home to 15 synagogues, ranging from humanistic, reform, re-constructionist, and conservative to orthodox.

Cincinnati has a new Jewish Community Center where the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Family Service offices are housed. Rockwern is a partner agency of the Jewish Federation, along with the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School (Orthodox Day School), the Mayerson Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Services, Jewish Vocational Services, and the University of Cincinnati's Hillel.

In addition to the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, which is the central fundraising organization for Jewish Cincinnati, the community is blessed with The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, a private philanthropy whose mission is to support, promote, advance, and strengthen the Jewish community and Jewish causes in greater Cincinnati. With assets of close to \$250 million, the Foundation focuses its resources on long-term investments and strategic and transformational grants that add to the vitality of the Jewish community now and for years to come. Among the Foundation's hallmark programs are generous travel grants for young people interested in traveling to Israel.

This spring, the Foundation awarded Rockwern Academy a grant of \$1.5 million, funds that will be used to support the hiring of an Admissions and Outreach Coordinator and a visionary, passionate Head of School – an appointment that is being viewed as critically important to the future of the school.

### THE STUDENT BODY

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As Cincinnati's only community Jewish day school, Rockwern Academy serves families across the full spectrum of Jewish observance – Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, non-affiliated, and mixed faith. The 2010-11 enrollment included 68 children in the preschool and 122 in the elementary grades. Because of low enrollment in the upper

grades, the school has temporarily suspended its seventh- and eighth-grade program, which it hopes to reinstate in the coming years. Although enrollment is down this year from the historic high of 400 and is expected to remain at current levels next year as well, the admissions office reports increased interest in the lower grades and much stronger retention this year in the important transition point from the 4-year-old program into kindergarten, with 19 of 23 students staying on. The 2-year-old program is now full with a waiting list, and a third section may be added if there is sufficient demand.

Recognizing that many families are struggling to afford tuition in these difficult economic times, Rockwern has expanded its financial aid programs, including introducing a flexible, multi-year tuition initiative aimed at middle-class parents. Thirty-seven percent of the students are receiving financial aid this year, with the school investing \$590,000 in this effort. The school's long-term vision is to ensure that every Jewish child who is accepted has the opportunity to attend regardless of financial means. Full-time tuition ranges from \$9,750 in the preschool to \$12,000 in grades K-6.

With Rockwern's longstanding reputation for excellence in academic preparation, its students typically go on to succeed at the many excellent public and independent schools in the Cincinnati area. The school's alumni include National Merit Finalists, a Fulbright Scholar, and a recipient of the Elie Wiesel Prize for Ethical Writing. Graduates have gone on to attend a broad range of colleges and universities, including Brown, Case Western, Columbia, Dartmouth, Georgetown, Harvard, Hebrew University-Tel Aviv, and Yale, among others.

## CAMPUS AND FACILITIES

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Rockwern Academy is situated on a five-acre, park-like campus in Sycamore Township that includes two playgrounds. The attractive, spacious, 125,000-square-foot facility features a regulation-size gym and a primary school gym; an atrium; a full-service cafeteria serving kosher food prepared on site; well-equipped classrooms and science labs, a computer lab, a library, a music room, and a synagogue and chapel. Promethean Active Boards have been introduced in several classrooms to support 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching.

Also housed on the Rockwern campus is the Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education, an independent organization that promotes tolerance, inclusion, and social justice based on lessons from the Holocaust. Its permanent exhibition, *Mapping Our Tears*, is an interactive environmental theater keeping alive testimonies from World War II and the Holocaust. Focused on curriculum development, teacher training, and innovative educational offerings, the center offers numerous opportunities for collaboration and integration with Rockwern's programs.

An affordable, family-oriented city, Cincinnati offers an excellent quality of life with numerous amenities, including fine art museums; a world-class orchestra, opera company and ballet; a variety of local theatres and Broadway shows, parks and recreational facilities, two professional sports teams, water and amusement parks, the University of Cincinnati, the Children's Hospital, and a bustling and growing riverfront.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

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Rockwern's broad and deep educational program features an 8:1 student-teacher ratio; daily Hebrew language learning beginning at age 2; service learning; a full guidance and student support service program; and innovative field trips. Individual attention is the norm here, with teachers balancing rigor and nurture. The arts are integrated throughout the curriculum, as evidenced by the beautiful art displayed throughout the campus. Also emphasized are the development of leadership skills and community outreach.

Teachers are trained in and employ the Responsive Classroom approach, which promotes social and emotional development as well as academic growth. The Rockwern faculty employs an outcomes-focused curriculum

development process (Understanding by Design) to carefully define the school's hopes and goals for its students. Rockwern is dedicated to building vibrant, joyful Jewish identities in each and every child.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Serving children from age 18 months to age 4, the early childhood education program provides a warm environment geared to preparing children academically, socially, and emotionally for kindergarten and beyond. Classes are small, and there are opportunities for gym, outdoor play, library, Shabbat and Jewish holiday celebrations, music, art, and Hebrew language instruction. The curriculum recognizes that a child's primary method of learning is through play. The Early Childhood program offers a variety of part- and full-time classes to meet the needs of a broad range of families.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

For students in grades K-6, Rockwern offers a strong academic curriculum that includes general studies, Judaic studies, and fine arts. Teachers work collaboratively to integrate learning experiences across subject areas and activities. As students move from Lower to Middle School, there is increased focus on leadership and Tikkun Olam. Traditionally, the culmination of the middle school experience has been a two-week trip to Israel for eighth-graders.

Throughout the school year, the Rockwern faculty offers special events and learning opportunities. This year, for example:

- The entire Rockwern student body engaged in a collaborative effort with The International Academy, a Muslim day school in nearby West Chester. Students from both schools read children's versions of *Three Cups of Tea*, the bestselling account of a mountain climber's efforts to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Older students from both schools wrote to each other as pen pals. In December, the students came together to share cups of tea and a musical performance that drew media attention throughout the Cincinnati area.
- Rockwern's sixth grade this year has participated enthusiastically in an innovative Math Challenge designed to strengthen their mental math calculation ability and increase confidence in their mathematical abilities.
- As part of school-wide anti-bullying educational effort organized by Rockwern's school counselor, the fifth-grade class produced a successful puppet show that they performed for several classes of younger students.



## LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS: JEWISH CELEBRATIONS AND OBSERVANCES

Throughout the school year and in every grade, Jewish celebrations and observances are thoroughly integrated into the Rockwern program. The Pre-School Shabbat Breakfast is a joyous occasion during which Rockwern's youngest students perform Hebrew songs and dances on stage, and then join their families for a special breakfast and classroom visits. Yom Hasidur is a highlight of the school year for the first-graders as they receive their first prayer book and lead their families and friends in a Shachareit which takes place in Boymel Synagogue. During this ceremony, the students receive a new siddur with a cover specially decorated by their parents.

The study of Torah begins in second grade. This important milestone is marked by an evening event during which the students are presented with a copy of the Five Books of the Torah. The students and their teachers prepare a program for their families and friends. In addition to learning about Shabbat, the third grade students are taught the Havdallah service, a ceremony that separates Shabbat from the week ahead. Family and friends are invited to participate in a

Saturday evening program during which the students lead a Havdallah service. The fourth grade class studies the Book of Exodus and prepares a program that celebrates freedom. Integrated into the program are reflections and stories from the very recent struggle for freedom of the black community in America.

The Jewish concept of Tzedakah (righteous giving to those less fortunate) is an essential element of the Rockwern curriculum. Many Tzedakah projects take place during the school year, and students are encouraged to contribute to the Tzedakah fund on Fridays and prior to holidays. The money collected is distributed to a number of local, national, and Israeli agencies.

Mitzvot are at the very core of Judaism and the heart of daily teaching at Rockwern Academy. Ethical as well as ritual Mitzvot are taught as students are challenged to make the world a better place through their behavior in the classroom, in their homes, and in the community. The process of studying, understanding, and carrying out Mitzvot is integrated with Rockwern's Wise Lives program and expressed through the giving of Tzedakah and by community service activities.

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## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Rockwern offers a variety of support services, including an integrated guidance counseling program. The Learning Lab is staffed by an academic specialist and a speech pathologist who provide both diagnostic and direct services to students experiencing learning issues.

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## **AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

As part of the commitment to educating the whole child, Rockwern offers after-school extracurricular activities. The After-School Care Program includes supervised play, homework time for older children, and a kosher snack. Older students may participate in boys and girls basketball. A changing lineup of enrichment classes taught by Rockwern staff or independent contractors is offered each trimester.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AWAITING THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL**



The next Head of Rockwern Academy will join a school community with a proud history, a dedicated faculty and staff, and supportive families. With these important building blocks solidly in place, the school's leadership is now focused on the challenges of building enrollment and ensuring long-term financial stability. The 18-member Board of Trustees has adopted a strategic plan designed to sharpen Rockwern's identity in the educational marketplace and position the school for long-term success. Key to that effort will be the hiring of a first-rate educational leader who can drive needed initiatives in the following areas:

1. Positioning Rockwern as a key leader and vital component within the Cincinnati Jewish ecosystem, strengthening the school's ties with area synagogues and other Jewish organizations.
2. Ensuring that both the secular and Jewish components of the curriculum are exemplary, including leading-edge offerings and more innovative uses of technology.
3. Marketing the school effectively and aggressively to build enrollment and limit attrition.
4. Cultivating donors and community relationships that will enable the school to operate with a balanced budget while supporting families with financial need.

To accomplish these ambitious but achievable goals, Rockwern Academy needs a Head of School with a clear vision and exceptional relationship-building skills. The just-announced \$1.5 million grant from the Jewish Foundation of

Cincinnati represents a much welcomed show of support for Rockwern and illustrates the importance of the school within the Jewish ecosystem of Cincinnati. Continuing to cultivate that support will be a prime responsibility of Rockwern's next Head of School, as will ongoing attention to positioning Rockwern as a vital link in the chain of Jewish community life.

The school's recent enrollment challenges have led to staff reductions and other internal organizational stresses to which the new Head will need to be sensitive. As one would expect in a school that serves families with a broad range of religious sensibilities, striking the appropriate balance with regard to Jewish studies is an ongoing challenge. The restoration of the position of Director of Jewish Life, which had been left unfilled for financial reasons, should provide the new Head with excellent support in a key area.

For a leader with the requisite skills and personal qualities, the headship of Rockwern Academy offers the potential for an extraordinarily rewarding career experience.

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## **LEADERSHIP PROFILE: QUALITIES & QUALIFICATIONS**

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Rockwern Academy's Head of School supports the school's mission of offering a superior Judaic and general education for the children of Cincinnati by providing leadership to the faculty and staff; by serving as a liaison between the school, students, parents, and the community; by designing and implementing programs and processes that enrich the school; and by encouraging the development of each member of the school family. The Head of School reports to the Board of Trustees and provides direct or indirect supervision to all other employees of Rockwern Academy. Compensation will be very competitive.

Rockwern Academy is seeking a transformational leader who will seize the opportunity to solidify the school's important role within Cincinnati's Jewish community. The ideal candidate will offer most or all of the following attributes:

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### **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

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- Solid educational credentials, including an advanced degree.
- A record of successful leadership in an educational or other nonprofit institution, ideally including experience in a Jewish day school or organization.
- A broad CEO perspective that encompasses both the external and internal aspects of leadership in a small-school setting.
- A demonstrated ability to supervise, mentor, evaluate, and motivate faculty and staff.
- An entrepreneurial and creative mindset, coupled with business acumen and the ability to build a strong network.
- A strong background in fundraising, marketing, and community outreach.
- Exceptional communication and presentation skills.

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### **LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES**

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- A committed Jew who is knowledgeable about Jewish history, culture, and traditions and who is respectful of the full spectrum of religious observance and affiliation represented within the school family.
- A strategic thinker and visionary planner with the ability to achieve goals through effective execution.
- An outgoing, charismatic, engaging person who will represent the school well and forge strong connections in the broader community.
- A highly professional leader who inspires confidence, promotes strong morale, and communicates well.
- An energetic person who works hard, exhibits a positive attitude, enjoys his or her work, and is undaunted by challenges.
- A family-oriented individual who loves education and children.



## THE SEARCH PROCESS AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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Acting on behalf of Rockwern Academy, Wickenden Associates is actively recruiting successful educational leaders who possess the skills, personal qualities, and experience necessary to meet the demands of this exciting and challenging position.

Prospective candidates should immediately contact Senior Search Consultant Linda F. Knights via email to [lknight@wickenden.com](mailto:lknight@wickenden.com) or by telephone to 609-683-1355. Applications will be reviewed as they arrive.

**As soon as possible**, applicants should submit the following:

- *A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.*
- *A current résumé.*
- *A statement of educational philosophy and/or other supporting material (e.g. articles or speeches) that would be useful to the Search Committee.*
- *The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.)*

These materials should be transmitted via email attachment to [searches@wickenden.com](mailto:searches@wickenden.com).

Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process. Ideally, the successful candidate will take office in July 2012.