



Forward, Together.

May 14, 2018

## An Open Letter to Jewish Buffalo:

This is an urgent communication, about a dire crisis facing a community institution, and the need for a community-wide solution.

*Einav Symons  
Head of School*

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*Established 1959*

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BENEFICIARY  
Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo

The Buffalo Jewish community is a deeply rooted and vibrant family of individuals, families, synagogues and agencies. Like any family, we come from different perspectives, we may not always agree with each other, and we have much to improve upon. Yet, we support each other, work together and unify in times of need. We each play a vital role in an ecosystem that makes our community stronger, especially as Greater Buffalo is experiencing a broader renaissance.

That unity of community is needed now. Kadimah Academy has been educating Jewish students in Western New York for nearly 60 years, with great pride in all that we have accomplished. We are an egalitarian community day school, serving the full spectrum of Jewish Buffalo, treating all equally, and taking pride in our strong ties to Israel. Our students excel in a broad array of secular and Jewish studies. Our alumni can be found throughout Buffalo, the nation, and the world, where they are active in their own communities - including here. Our passion for Buffalo is unmistakable.

We are a small school, with highly personalized attention and a nurturing environment. We have had our struggles, but we also have ambitions to do more, not only for our own families, but for the entire community through partnerships with other agencies and synagogues.

Unfortunately, demographics in Buffalo have changed, and financial constraints have now cast serious doubt upon Kadimah's ability to continue operations in the future.

The Board of Trustees and Administration of Kadimah have sought to address these challenges for many years by maintaining a tight budget that controls our costs, while aggressively seeking new revenue sources and more students. Even so, there is a limit to how much we can accomplish without the full community behind us - from the smallest supporter to the largest. The gap is significant.

The Board of Trustees this past week met with faculty, parents and other key stakeholders, to notify them of a significant risk that Kadimah may have to close at the conclusion of the current school year. No final decisions have been made, and our teachers and families are determined to pull through. But the result will be inevitable without your help.

We are eternally grateful to everyone who has supported us in the past and entrusted us with your children or grandchildren. We are especially grateful to Dr. Sol Messinger for all of his support throughout our history, including now; to all of the

donors who have given so generously; and to the Buffalo Jewish Federation for its multifaceted help in many ways.

Please be aware that any existing or future financial support remains invaluable to us and to the community. If the school does close, all funds currently held by Kadimah will still be used for Jewish education in Buffalo in the future, through other means such as scholarships or other endeavors. Not a single dollar given to education is ever lost, even if the school as we have known it for nearly six decades no longer exists.

However, Kadimah recognizes that some donors may be concerned about giving at this time, so we will hold off cashing checks or processing credit cards by phone or mail for new donations at this time. If the threshold can be met to keep the school open, then we will cash all checks and process all credit card pledges. If the threshold cannot be met, then we will return the checks and not process the credit card pledges. We hope this will address any reservations about digging deep to save our school and the future of Jewish education in Buffalo.

A Jewish day school is an essential component of a thriving Jewish community, along with synagogues, charity funds, a JCC, adult education, cemeteries and other services. Every piece of that fabric plays a role, even if not everyone needs or uses every piece, because they are signs of strength and commitment. Kadimah is the only community Jewish day school in Buffalo. Without it, our community will lose families and professionals, who must otherwise move away because they need a day school for their families. Without it, we will never know how many professionals will never consider Buffalo as a place to live, because it simply lacks all the components of a vibrant community. Without a commitment to education, where is our community's future?

The Board of Trustees is fully prepared, with the deepest of regrets, to close Kadimah if necessary, while working on alternative solutions to keep our current families in Buffalo. There are no guarantees that will work. We pray it will not come to that.

To help in any way, financial or otherwise, please contact the school at (716) 836-6903 or online at [www.kadimah.org](http://www.kadimah.org). Thank you for your dedication and support of Kadimah and Jewish Buffalo.

Sincerely,

Alan Rosenhoch  
President, Kadimah Board of Trustees

Jonathan D. Epstein  
Immediate Past-President, Kadimah Board of Trustees

Einav Symons  
Head of School