



PARTNERSHIP FOR
EXCELLENCE
IN JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish Day Schools עתידנו *Our Future*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION
NAMES DEBBIE SWARTZ AS BOARD CHAIR**

Day school "insider" to provide new leadership

BOSTON, Oct. 18, 2007 – The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) has announced the appointment of Deborah Cogen Swartz as its new Board Chair. She succeeds PEJE founder and first Board Chair, Michael Steinhardt. Swartz, an eight-year PEJE Board member, takes the helm as the organization begins its second decade and prepares to build on the solid foundation established by Steinhardt. Swartz will be officially welcomed by the PEJE Board and executive director Rabbi Josh Elkin on October 22 at their board meeting just prior to PEJE's 10th anniversary celebration symposium, "Celebrating 10 Years of Believing in Jewish Day School Education."

"As I pass the baton to Debbie, I feel confident about PEJE's future and Debbie's leadership," said founding Board Chair, Michael Steinhardt. "She represents the next generation of philanthropists and takes the helm of PEJE at a time when it has the support of twenty involved, creative, visionaries from around the country and across denominational lines. Elected unanimously, Debbie has the vision, intellect and courage to inspire PEJE to attain its dreams for excellence for Jewish day schools."

Swartz believes deeply in the value of Jewish day schools. She and her husband, Jeff Swartz, enrolled each of their children in Jewish day schools beginning in kindergarten. Debbie is a former Chair of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston, and Jeff is the current Chair of the Maimonides School in Brookline, MA.

In speaking about Debbie Swartz, Elkin said, "We are thrilled to welcome Debbie as the new PEJE Board Chair. She is a respected leader and has a unique perspective on day schools. Debbie will inspire us with her commitment to raise the bar for excellence in all Jewish day schools."

Swartz's background as a teacher with a Master's degree in education set her on a course to become an advocate outside the classroom. She has demonstrated leadership as Board Chair of Solomon Schechter, as Co-chair of the Day School Affordability task force for Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) of Boston and currently as a member of the CJP Strategic Planning Committee. Her immediate goal for PEJE is to support the new strategic plan that identifies new ways to strengthen and sustain Jewish day schools.

"As PEJE enters its adolescence, we must dig deeper and learn more about what schools need to succeed in these times," said Swartz. "Having been a day school insider I know what it means to schools to receive the support from an organization like PEJE. In the decades ahead, we will continue to focus on the excellence of day schools and how to build capacity within them, no matter what denomination. This is about strengthening and enriching the future of *all* Jewish people."

A graduate of Brown University, Swartz received her Master's in Education from Harvard University and did further post graduate study at Lesley University.

PEJE Partners fund and govern the organization. They make decisions about PEJE policy and future initiatives, guided by the mission and insights of the PEJE staff and professional delegates.

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About PEJE

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE www.peje.org), founded in 1997 by Michael Steinhardt and Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, is a national organization of visionary Jewish philanthropists seeking to establish a vibrant and sustainable Jewish future through strengthening the Jewish day school movement in North America. In its first ten years, PEJE's model of making grants, providing expertise, and advocating for the day school movement reached over 150 elementary, middle, and high schools and invested a total of over \$20 million in the field. PEJE has contributed to the opening of over 60 new Jewish day schools.