

# Teaching Toward an Ethical Democracy

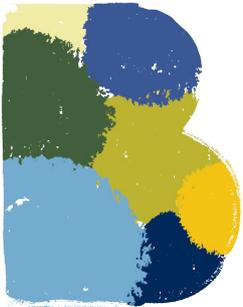
December 13, 2022  
Dr. Dan Glass



The  
Brandeis  
School  
OF SAN FRANCISCO

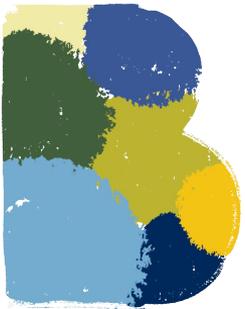
# Outline

- Who we are and how we got here
- Creating the context
  - Justice Brandeis Day
  - Naming the goal
- Mifgash Project
- Empowering faculty



# Our Mission

The Brandeis School of San Francisco inspires students to lead lives of learning and purpose. We provide a challenging academic environment and a welcoming, inclusive community, each deeply enriched by Jewish thought, values and traditions.



# Our Values

Kindness - *Chesed*

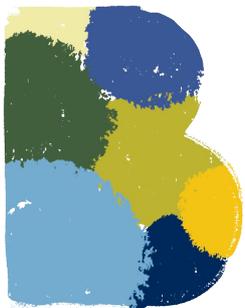
We treat one another and ourselves with empathy and compassion.

Integrity - *Ometz Lev*

We act honestly, responsibly, and courageously.

Service - *Tikkun Olam*

We embrace our collective responsibility to help repair the world.





## Justice Brandeis Day

In November 2017, The Brandeis School of San Francisco community of students, faculty, and staff gathered to commemorate the first annual Justice Brandeis Day, a day to celebrate the life and legacy of our school namesake Louis Brandeis.

Justice Brandeis embodied the principle of social justice, and the community was asked to reflect on this principle by responding to the following questions:

- What grounds you? (rocks)
- What do you stand up for? (wooden coins)

Each year, our school community marks Justice Brandeis Day, and we invite our new students, faculty, and staff to add their own pieces to this display.





“In the frank expression of  
conflicting opinions lies the  
greatest promise of wisdom”  
-Justice Louis Brandeis



# BRANDEIS 2023 VISION:

"... Brandeis graduates go on to be leaders in their communities and stewards of democracy."

The Brandeis School of San Francisco has reimagined what is possible in an inclusive, future-focused Jewish day school, becoming an acknowledged leader in asserting the role of spirituality and ethics in educating the whole child. Our challenging academic program meets students where they are and encourages them toward where they can be, guided by master teachers. Brandeis students have the opportunity to learn by solving real-world problems, and Brandeis graduates go on to be leaders in their communities and stewards of democracy.



# OUR VISION BEGINS WITH THREE BELIEFS:

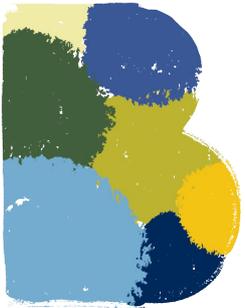
## **STUDENT-CENTERED, INQUIRY-BASED, AND REAL-WORLD LEARNING IS THE FUTURE.**

**We believe that children make meaning through thoughtful and critical engagement with the world.** Following millennia of Jewish tradition, Brandeis students begin with questions in constructing their own understandings of Jewish learning and their world, becoming critical and connected thinkers. The school gives students agency in their learning by allowing them to design their own meaningful projects and curious pathways through learning. By connecting learning and purpose through units and projects that give students opportunities to engage with real-world challenges, we prepare Brandeis graduates to be leaders in their fields in a rapidly-changing future.

# Encountering Democracy - The *Mifgash* Project

A K-8 curriculum and [educator's toolkit focused on civic engagement](#) and American Jewish history, honoring Justice Louis Brandeis, our school's namesake and the first Jewish member of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Supporting our students at every stage of their Brandeis education, as they develop the knowledge base, habits of mind, and [practices of good citizenship](#).



Because we firmly believe that [a thriving democracy is essential](#) to the long-range health of the Jewish community, and all minority communities, here and around the world.

# Mifgash Project Strands

- 1) Encountering Democracy
- 2) Jewish Contributions to American Democracy, Democratic Contributions to American Jewry
- 3) Jewish Ethics and Democratic Habits of Mind
- 4) Reflective Practices in Real Time

A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, spanning across the water. The bridge's iconic orange-red towers and suspension cables are visible against a clear blue sky. The water is a deep blue-green color. The title "Encountering Democracy" is overlaid in a large, bold, orange-red font.

# Encountering Democracy

In this elective we have two main goals:

1. To work together to understand our local government - its structure, who are our elected officials, the many ways in which our local government shapes our daily lives, and how can we use our knowledge of our state and local government structures to affect change we believe in.
2. To create a curriculum to teach what we've learned about our local government to our third graders through engaging lessons and hands on experiences so that they feel empowered to be agents of change in their community.

Thus our guiding question for this work is...

**How might we teach third graders about our local government in a way that engages and excites them to see themselves as active citizens and agents of change in their local community.**





# **Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the First Bat Mitzvah**

Middle School Assembly  
March 18, 2022

Now that I have your attention ...

We're here today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Bat Mitzvah in the United States. Bar Mitzvahs have been around since the 13th century as a way to welcome young men into Jewish traditions through a formal ceremony. But for many hundreds of years, girls were excluded.



# Women in the 1920s

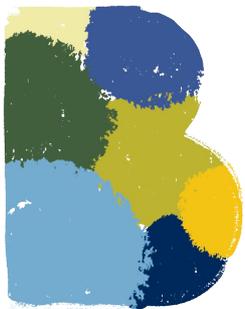
In 1922 Judith Kaplan was 12 years old. It was an exciting time to be a young girl. Women had just gotten the right to vote and the first woman was serving in the United States Senate.



Rebecca Latimer Felton of Georgia

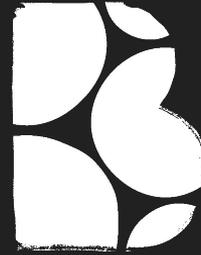
## 2nd Grade - Democracy in Action

How can we amplify student voice and choice?

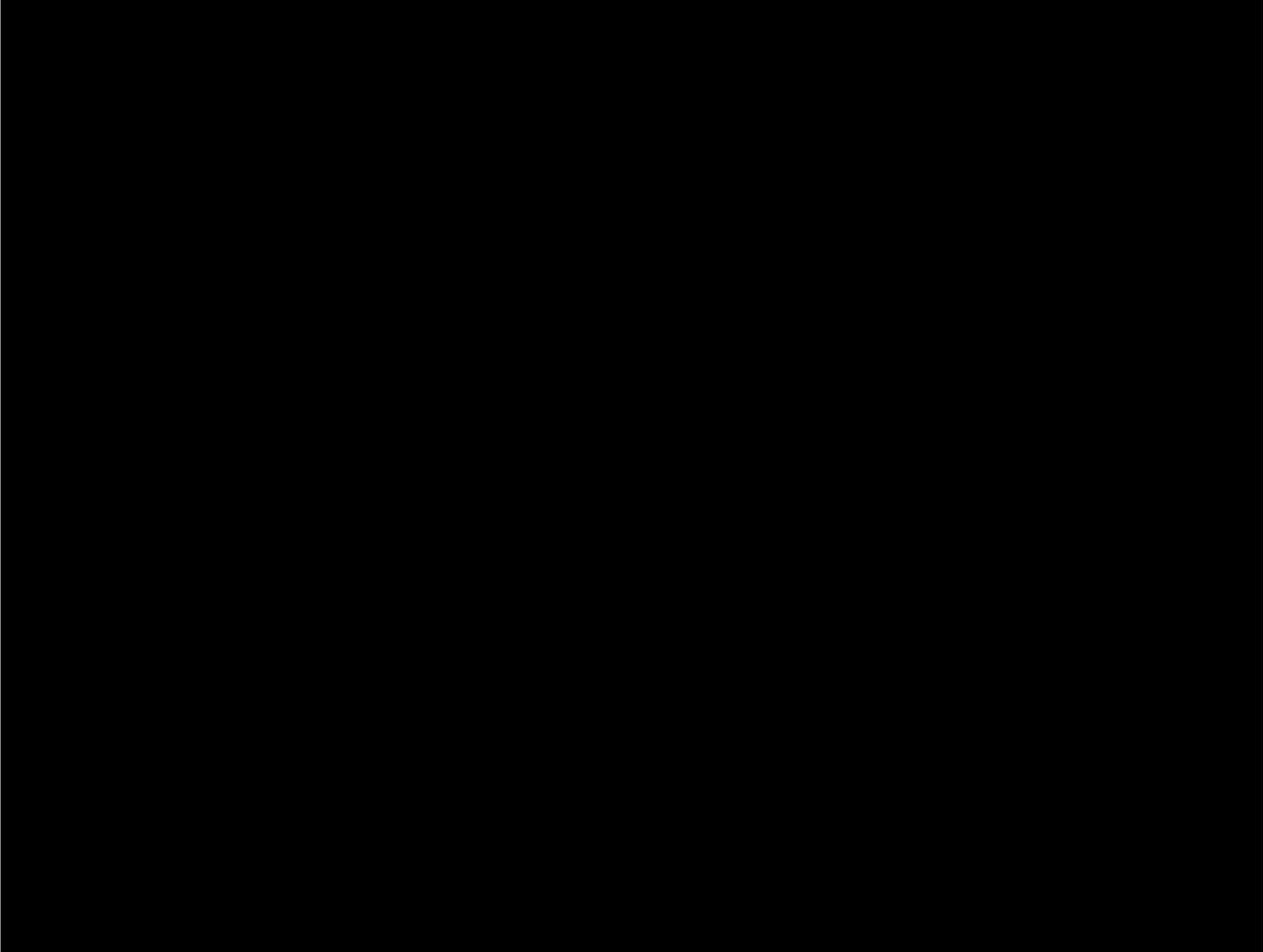


# What does a class meeting look like?

- 30 minutes a week
- Discuss problems students bring up
- Students propose solutions and debate topic
- Students vote on a solution to try



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# Reflective Practices in Real Time: 2022 Elections

Immediate thoughts on the connection to our core Jewish values:

Chesed: \_\_\_\_\_

Ometz Lev: \_\_\_\_\_

Tikkun Olam: \_\_\_\_\_

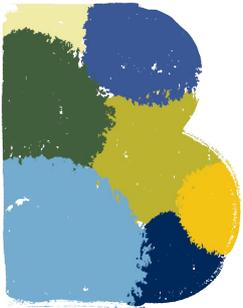
What is something you are wondering about when you think about this?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Kindergarten - Our Own Stories

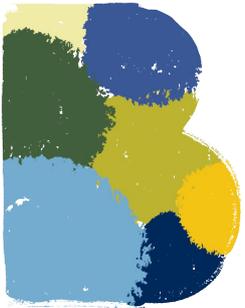
“The more deeply  
you are yourself,  
the more deeply  
you can reach  
toward others.”

- Rabbi David Wolpe



# 1st Grade - Our Obligations to Others

What does it take to build a community?



**The following oath has been in use since 1884. Both President and Vice President use this oath prior to noon. Just before noon, Justice Sonia Sotomayor will officiate the swearing in for Vice President Kamala Harris.**

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

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“If we treat democracy and Judaism as irreconcilable value systems, there are surely plenty of Jews in the world who would choose one over the other. But what if, instead, we understood our Judaism as *requiring* an interlacing with our democratic commitments—if we refused to accept that a “clash” was inevitable or could not be overcome?”

-Yehuda Kurtzer,  
“Liberal Zionism & the Idea of the Idea”