

BUILDING SCHOOLS FROM SCRATCH

Opportunities, Challenges, &
Lessons Learned Along the Way

Gil Perl



PROJECTS:



YESHIVA LAB SCHOOL

Fall, 2015



KOHELET YESHIVA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fall, 2017



JEWISH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Fall, 2023



ACADEMY X

Fall, 2019



MO YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

Fall, 2022



THE STORIES

- Located in suburban Philadelphia
- Project of the Kohelet Foundation
- Based on the question “What do we know about how children learn?”



THE STORIES:

Yeshiva Lab School

Thoughtfully constructed physical learning environments maximize student learning opportunities.

Eliminating and reducing the teacher's voice gives students more time to learn.

Authentic evidence and performance-based assessments significantly increase student engagement and motivation

Real-world applications and experiences lead to **real-world learning**.

Appropriate amounts of **struggle**, discomfort, and error-making lead to deeper learning.

Self-reflection and **metacognition** allow students to locate themselves on their journey toward learning.

Consistent collection of qualitative and quantitative data allows for adaptive instructional decision-making for every student.

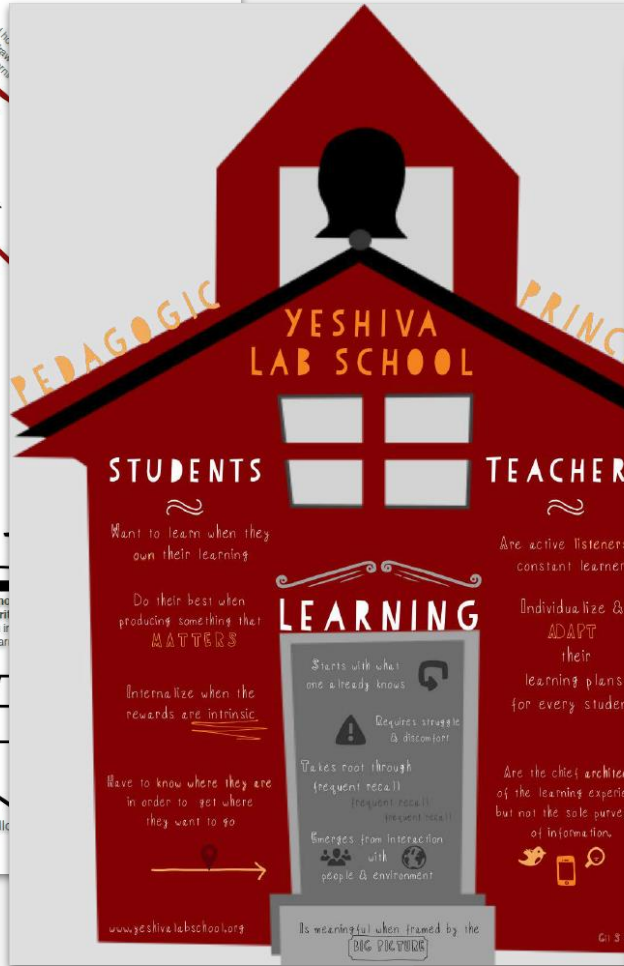
Opportunities for student **choice** increase student ownership and interest in the learning process.

End spirit from learning

In a world of infinite information, skills are infinitely more valuable than content.

Context and relevance are created when content is presented **whole to part**.

Accessing **prior knowledge and experience** allow for accurate and impactful learning.



PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

1. **Context** creates connections.
2. **Self-awareness** fuels progress.
3. **Mistakes** are a necessary part of the process.
4. **Personalized learning** maximizes student motivation and achievement.
5. **Real-world experiences** promote real-world learning.
6. **Frequent recall** forms long term memory.
7. **Intrinsic rewards** lead to long term growth.
8. **Choice** empowers.
9. **Voice** inspires.
10. **Learning** happens all the time and everywhere.



- Started in Fall of 2015 with a class of 17 Kindergartners
- Admin team of 3
- Merges with Kohelet Yeshiva High School in 2016
- Adds Kohelet Yeshiva Middle School in 2017



THE STORIES:

Yeshiva Lab School

- Project of the Kohelet Foundation
- Partnered with Institute of Play (NYC) and AltSchool (San Francisco)
- Started in Fall of 2017 with 23 6th graders and 8 7th graders



THE STORIES:

Kohelet Yeshiva Middle School



- Currently 245 students
- Part of Kohelet Yeshiva K-12





- Project of two Grammy award nominated artists: Andreas Carlsson & Andrew Lerios
- Modeled after a successful Swedish venture
- Didn't open due to projected cost



AXB SCHOOLS

THE STORIES:
Academy X

- Started with a community needs assessment
- Secured initial funding
- Developed educational model
- Didn't open due to leadership fears over lack of critical mass



THE STORIES:

Small Town Modern Orthodox High School

- Project of the Gisela and Daniel Ades Foundation
- 2 planning years
- 21-22: Team of five:
 - HOS
 - CFO / COO
 - Assoc Head for MS
 - Assoc Head for US
 - Dir. of Communications
- Campus Design
- Program Design
- Branding & Marketing



THE STORIES:

Jewish Leadership Academy

- 22-23: Team of 15:
 - HOS
 - CFO / COO
 - Assoc Head for MS
 - Assoc Head for US
 - Dir. of Communications
 - Dir. of Admissions
 - Assoc Head for Judaics
 - Campus Rabbi (remote)
 - Dir of Jewish Life (remote)
 - Humanities Chair
 - STEM Chair
 - Dir. of Operations
 - HOS Exec Assistant
 - Bookkeeper
 - HR / CFO Assistant
- Student Recruitment
- Faculty Recruitment
- Curriculum Design
- Construction



THE STORIES:

Jewish Leadership Academy

- Opened for Fall 2023
- 99 students in grades 6,7,9,&10
- 29 faculty
- 5 buildings on 5.5 acre campus
- Expecting 175-180 students for Fall 2024
- ~40-45% acceptance rate



THE STORIES:

Jewish Leadership Academy

THE LESSONS

THE LESSONS

FOCUS ON MISSION

01

Say who you
are... and who
you're not

02

Define the
relationship to
the community



THE LESSONS

THINK LIKE A
START-UP

03

Prepare to
overspend

04

Plan for stability

THE LESSONS

THINK LIKE A
START-UP

05

Personnel ready
for all hands on
deck

06

Parents ready
for an unfinished
product



THE LESSONS

LEARN TO LISTEN

07

Distinguish
between vision
and execution

08

Distinguish
between
tomorrow, next
year, and in the
near future



LET'S TALK

- 1 thing that is working
- 1 thing that is not working
- Admin silent & taking notes
- Email summary & response within 2 weeks

THE LESSONS

EARLY HIRES

09

Invest in your story.

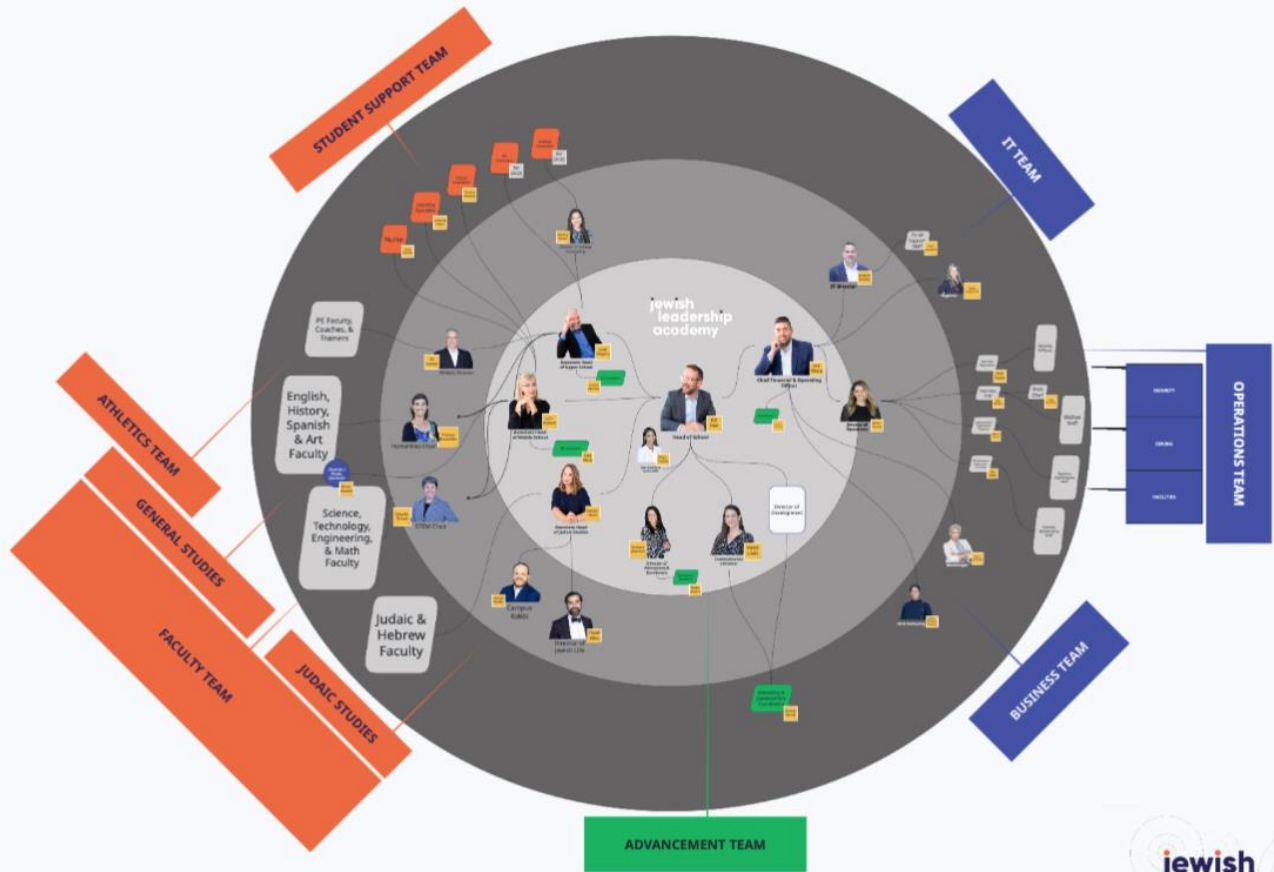
Start with the why.

10

Hire people, not positions.

Look for people who aren't like you.

PROGRAM



BUSINESS / OPERATIONS

ADVANCEMENT TEAM

ADVANCEMENT



Jewish Leadership Academy



Navigation and editing tools including icons for back, forward, search, and editing.

Alexander
Chair

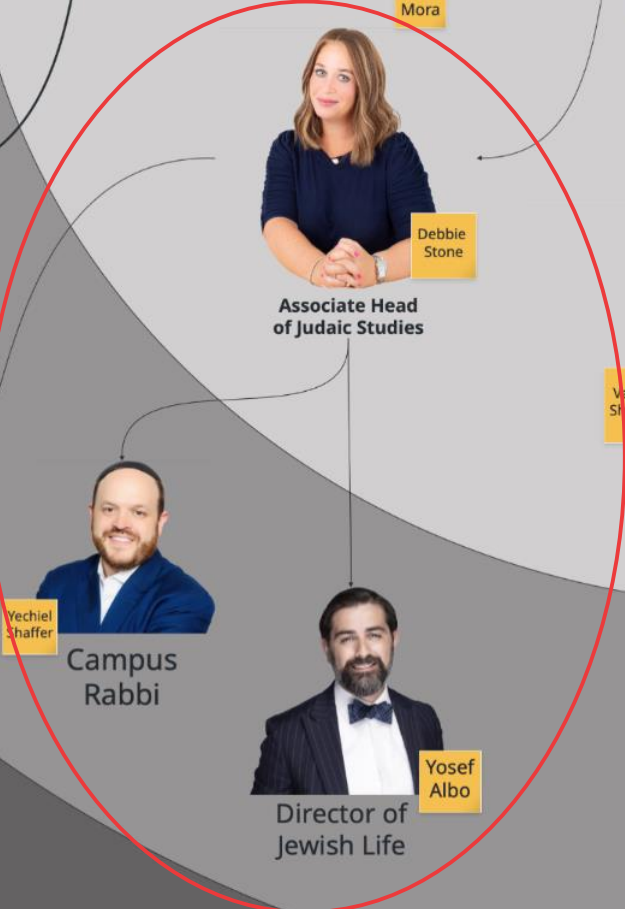


Chair

Vertical toolbar with icons for navigation and editing: play, edit, copy, zoom, search, refresh, undo, redo, zoom in, zoom out, share

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W
y

Bottom left navigation icons: list, lock, menu



MS Assistant
Sara Mora



Debbie Stone
Associate Head of Judaic Studies



Yechiel Shaffer
Campus Rabbi



Yosef Albo
Director of Jewish Life



Alexa Castillo
Exec Assistant to the HOS

Head of School



Vanessa Slamosh
Director of Admissions & Enrollment

Admissions Assistant
Malka Meyers



Yamit Linde
Communications Director

Director of Development

Jewish Leadership Academy



Joaquin Infante
IT Director



Nellie Goepfer
Registrar

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Judd Shapiro
Associate Head of School

US Assistant
Andrea Aguiniga



Gil Perl
Head of School

MS Assistant
Sara Mora



Alexa Castillo
Exec Assistant to the HOS



Joe Sharp
Chief Financial & Operating Officer

RECEPTIONIST
Melissa Carrasana



Jenna Gasner
Director of Operations

THE LESSONS

1. **MISSION:** Say who you are... and who you're not
2. **MISSION:** Define the relationship to the community
3. **STARTUP:** Prepare to overspend
4. **STARTUP:** Plan for stability
5. **STARTUP:** Personnel ready for all hands on deck
6. **STARTUP:** Parents ready for an unfinished product
7. **LISTEN:** Distinguish between vision and execution
8. **LISTEN:** Distinguish between tomorrow, next year, and in the near future
9. **HIRES:** Invest in your story. Start with the why.
10. **HIRES:** Hire people, not positions. Look for people who aren't like you.

QUESTIONS?

