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:
Yeshiva Lab School

- Located in suburban Philadelphia
- Project of the Kohelet Foundation
- Based on the question “What do we know about how children learn?”
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.
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 Carlson & Andrew Lerios
Modeled after a successful Swedish venture
Didn’t open due to projected cost
THE STORIES:
Small Town Modern Orthodox High School

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

- Head of School: Gil Perl
- Chief Financial & Operating Officer: Joe Sharp
- IT Director: Joaquin Infante
- Director of Operations: Jenna Gasner
- Registrar: Nelson Gopher
- MS Assistant: Sara Mora
- EA Assistant to the HOS: Alexa Castilla
- US Assistant: Andrea Aguilega
- Receptionist: Blanka Sternovski
- Associate Head of Upper School: Judd Shapiro
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?