



**HOW TO CREATE A SCHOOL**

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**Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman**

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## HOW TO CREATE A SCHOOL

1. Search carefully for the right site. The piece of land must be large enough to contain every additional element the school might need, thinking ahead for 100 years. Utilize experts to give advice on directions of future growth of the city, future roads, airports and any other facilities which might impinge on the school's environment.

You might decide that the entire campus should be ringed with trees as a screen against traffic. You can plant beautiful oaks, elms and maples at a decent height right from the beginning, but the area must be large enough so that you will be able to erect additional buildings without being forced to sacrifice trees.

You might decide, some years after the school has reached full size (whether that is the 500-600, for a boarding school; or the 900-1000, for a day school), that you wish to add an inn to accomodate visiting parents or other guests. That inn could even be expanded into a full-fledged conference center, which would bring additional revenue to the school.

You certainly must plan right from the beginning the full panoply of athletic facilities required, and it is better to plan for the maximum instead of starting small and thinking that you can always add later. If you are short of land, there will never be a later, and you will forever feel cramped. There should be full-sized fields for football, soccer, rugby and baseball. Additional areas for volleyball and lacrosse. A croquet lawn and outdoor bowls would be lovely. And at least a dozen tennis courts. Some bleachers are necessary for the larger fields. All the above takes an enormous amount of acreage.

There is no need to go further into detail. The school must have a gorgeous look and feel which space can provide. Long stretches of green lawn, surrounded by trees and flowers, will actually improve the academic performance of students, in addition to shaping their attitude toward environmentalism and acting as an inhibitor of uncivilized conduct.

Look for a space of 100-200 acres. The very worst that could happen is that you have over-bought, in which case you can move a few trees, sell off the excess 20 years later, and make enough profit so that the whole establishment will wind up costing you nothing.



2. Gather Key Personnel for initial advice. There are key people who must be sought, whose advice at the beginning will be invaluable. Some may ultimately be included in the actual operation of the school; others may make their contribution so that we start on the right path, and then may fade from the picture. As examples of areas which must be investigated at the beginning, and people who can give us advice in these areas are the following:

a. Head - Joseph Reimer, currently professor of education at Brandeis and head of the School of Jewish Communal Service, plus a team at Stanford University, with which he is affiliated.

b. General Planning - Benno Schmidt, former president of Yale, currently head of the Edison Project, part of the Whittle Corporation, which is planning to build hundreds of schools on a for-profit basis.

c. Private Schools - Theodore Sizer, probably the number one person in America on this subject. Formerly head of the Graduate School at Harvard, then headmaster of Andover for ten years, currently head of the Department of Education at Brown, and creating an alliance of magnet schools whom he is advising on curriculum. His ideas are the most innovative in the country.

d. Secular Curriculum - Teacher's College, Columbia, Department for Gifted and Talented Students.

e. Judaic Curriculum - Ramaz High School  
Bi-Cultural School, Stamford, Ct.  
JESNA - James Woocher  
BJE - N.Y. Fed. - Alvin Schiff

f. Architect - James Freed, architect of the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum in Washington, of the firm of I.M.Pei.

g. Lawyer - Kenneth Bialkin, of the firm Skadden Arps.

3. Select and Hire the Head, plus other key personnel:

- a. Deputy Head
- b. Financial Officer
- c. Administrative Officer
- d. Admissisons Officer

#### 4. Planning the Plant

Compose an Advisory Committee, consisting of various specialists, parents, the architect, the landscape architect, and gather them as individuals, according to their special interests, in very small groups (3 to 5 persons), never as a committee of the whole, until policy decisions are reached and the whole committee must ratify.

- a. Give special thought to science labs, language labs, and computer needs.
- b. Extra-curricular needs - music, drama, dance, debating, art, and any others.
- c. Sport needs - large fields, some with bleachers, for football, soccer, rugby, baseball, lacrosse; smaller areas for volleyball and handball; sufficient tennis courts.
- d. Separate field house for indoor sports - basketball, running track, squash courts, gymnasium, swimming pool, and sufficient showers and lockers.
- e. A student union building, with a large terrace open to the sky for a Sukkah.
- f. Housing for faculty who will live on campus.

#### 5. Match Advisory Committee Specialists with Architects, both Building and Landscape.

#### 6. Extra Planning Required for Dual Use of Plant by two kinds of students, day and boarding.

#### 7. Select the Contractor.

#### 8. Appointment of Lay Board and its Committees



## PEDAGOGICAL PLANNING

(simultaneous with construction)

1. Write the Rule Book

- a. Balance strictness with flexibility.

2. Finances

- a. Financial Officer plans and administers entire financial structure: construction costs; tuition fees; scholarships; fund-raising; operating budget, etc., etc. This Officer works very closely with relevant Board Committees.

3. Write the Curriculum

- a. Secular - keep an eye on admission criteria of Ivy League universities.
- b. Judaic - History, Bible, Mishna, Prayer-book, HolyDays and rituals, Religion, Modern Israel, and 4 years of Hebrew language and literature.

4. Plan Entire Extra-Curricular and Sports Program.

5. Selecting Students

- a. Let it be known that admission to this Academy will be difficult. Create a sense of elitism. When Jewish parents and the general public become aware that the Academy is aiming at the very highest standards, equivalent to the handful of top prep schools in the country (Andover and Exeter), parents will seek to get their children admitted.
- b. Create the most attractive set of activities, in addition to the academic studies, so that the kids will want to come. For example, a class trip to Israel every year, say for the 10th grade; class trips for the 11th grade to Egypt, Greece and Italy, to study ancient civilizations; class trips to Washington (study U.S. government); to Hawaii (study the two largest telescopes in the world; to Cape Canaveral (study the space program).

- c. There should be a strong intra-mural athletic schedule with the teams of other top academies in the U.S.; a full-scale drama program, involving top producers and directors (e.g. Hal Prince); a debating program based on the Oxford and Cambridge systems of arguing Resolutions of Public Interest.
- d. Contact must be made in the 36 cities in this country which contain large Jewish populations with all the educational forces in those cities - rabbis, principals of day and afternoon schools, counsellors in municipal schools, Boards of Jewish Education, local Federation directors, lay leaders on boards of agencies. The goals and methods of the Academy must be explained, and recommendations must be obtained of children who might be admissible. An intensive campaign of home visits, to parents, grandparents and students themselves to urge them to think of the Academy as the place for their talented children, will be necessary during the first years of the school's existence, until its reputation is firmly established.

#### 5. Start Search for Faculty

- a. Set salary standards, medical care, housing, etc.
- b. Throw out a wide net to obtain recommendations.
- c. College faculty, at assistant and associate professor level, may well be attracted to our Academy.



October 3, 1994

## MAJOR ITEMS ON CREATING A HIGH SCHOOL

### 1. Marketing

- a. Linkages with all day schools, Bureau of Jewish Education, leading congregational schools (Rabbis), to accumulate lists of potential students.
- b. Make list of leading families in town with children in grades two below opening grade of your school, and start soliciting those families individually for their children.
- c. Create advisory board of prestigious people in the educational world (not only Jewish).
- d. Design attractive brochure, describing all attributes of school - i.e., sports program (intramural with other high schools, public and private); extra-curricular activities being offered; fluency in Hebrew spoken language; tenth grade program in Israel, etc.).

### 2. Finances

- a. Do *not* concentrate only on building costs. Create from beginning a student financial-aid program in form of an endowment fund. This should at very least equal, if not surpass, the building fund.
- b. Create a 501-C-3 non-profit tax-deductible corporation which owns and manages the school.

### 3. Name of School

- a. Must be universal, attractive - San Diego Academy  
La Jolla Academy  
King David Academy

4. Find Headmaster

- a. Hire him immediately, years before school will open, so that he can participate in shaping curriculum, recruiting faculty, approving architectural planning, etc.

5. Recruiting Students

- a. Must be very selective - tests, questionnaires, personal interviews.

6. Religious Orientation

- a. Must be pluralistic, traditional yet flexible, egalitarian.

