

RESUME GUIDELINES FOR JEWISH DAY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The information contained herein, including the recommendations we make and suggestions we give, are based on our extensive work with Jewish day schools from across North America as well as our review of the scholarly literature in the relevant fields. What you see here may differ from what you hear from career centers, career coaches, and other sources. We believe that these are the most comprehensive and up-to-date recommendations for resume writing when applying to leadership positions at Jewish day schools.

YOUR RESUME: AN OVERVIEW

A resume is a job-search tool whose main and initial purpose is to get you an interview. It can also help you prepare for an interview and organize your most important information for a search committee. Your resume introduces you on paper (or electronically) and tells a story about you, including your work experience, education, and interests in an easy-to-read, positive manner; it is your “ticket” to an initial interview.

Your resume:

- **Initiates contact** with a school search committee
- Gives search committee members a “**snapshot**” of your training, education, experience, accomplishments, skills, activities, and interests; it gives you full credit for your accomplishments (even if you weren’t paid for them)
- **Leaves information about you** with search committee members to promote future contact
- Is a **networking tool** that helps those who want to help you (colleague, professor, former employer, etc.)
- Is a **guideline** for you to review your qualifications before an interview; during the interview, it focuses the search committee’s attention and guides the search committee toward positive things to talk about
- Always moves in **reverse chronological order**, with your most recent experience on top
- Is consistently and constantly a compelling answer to the question, “**Why should we call this candidate?**”

FORMAT, FONT, PAPER

Make sure your resume looks presentable when printed and on-screen since most search committee members will view your resume on their computers when you email it to them.

Always send your resume in PDF format. Although MS Word is preferred in the business world (where automated resume scanners look through hundreds of resumes for key words and phrases), it is not in Jewish education. Different versions of Word mean your formatting might not be preserved, and many of the phrases you use on your resume (especially your name and Jewish

words) might appear with a red underline. That's not the kind of attention you want to draw as a first impression.

Keep the margins at default levels unless you have a compelling reason to change them. Leave a reasonable amount of space between sections. Choose to use bolding, italics, and other formatting wisely, and, most importantly, REMAIN CONSISTENT. Don't use italics one way in one section and another way in another section.

For font, don't choose something cute or overly different. Due to its overuse, you probably want to avoid Times New Roman. Stick with normal fonts like Arial or Helvetica. Don't include graphics or pictures on your resume, either. They usually distract from the content.

Since your resume will mostly be emailed to the search committee, you don't have to spend much time worrying about paper choice. The content of your resume is more important than the paper it's printed on.

WHAT TO INCLUDE: THE ESSENTIAL AND OPTIONAL SECTIONS

Speaking of content, the four areas we have found that search committees most want to know about are: Contact Information, Leadership Experience, Education, and Skills. There are other categories (in italics below) which one may choose to include as well. The sections are organized in the order they should appear on your resume; some variations in the order are acceptable, but are rarely called for. More on each of these below.

- **Contact information**
- **Relevant Experience**
 - **School Leadership/Job Specific Experience**
 - *Related Experience*
 - *Other experience*
- **Education**
- *Certifications*
- *Skills, Activities, and Interests*
- *References*

CONTACT INFORMATION

This is the most basic section. Include your name, address, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile and/or Twitter handle.

Your name should be the name you go by. If you have a legal name (English), but go by your Jewish name, put your Jewish name on your resume, since that's how people know you. For example, Morris Moshe Ploniberg should put Moshe Ploniberg on his resume if nobody calls him Morris other than the IRS. If you go by a nickname, put your real name first, followed by your nickname in quotation marks. For example, if Chana Plonistein always goes by Chani, she should write Chana "Chani" Plonistein at the top of her resume.

Your address should be the address where you get your mail and live now, not your mom's house back in the old country, and not your current work address. Search Committees simply want to know where you live; they probably won't be mailing anything to you.

Your phone number should ideally connect to your personal cell phone. If not, it should be a number where you can be easily reached, especially during evening hours since that's when search committee members will likely want to call you. Don't put your work number, though; it might be uncomfortable for you to get a call from a potential employer while you're still at your current job. Also, don't put a home number if there's any likelihood that someone else will answer that line, especially a child.

Your email address should be a private, personal address that is professional-sounding. Don't use your school or work address, and don't use cutesy addresses like SmileyMorah2000@yahoo.com or ShlomiLovesSteak@gmail.com. Also, even though it may seem like a good idea, it's not wise to use an address that describes you by your work (e.g., EdTechRebbe@gmail.com or SimchaBand@yahoo.com) since search committee members may be turned off by it. Since they'll search for your emails in their inbox by your first or last name, it will be harder for them to identify you if your email address doesn't include either. Pick an address that includes your first initial and last name or your full name. Finally, although it may seem silly, we recommend that you do NOT use an AOL (or similarly outdated) email address. Some people believe (based on anecdotal evidence and experience) that those who still use AOL email address are less technologically savvy and less current. Also, make sure the address you list is one that you check frequently. You should reply to any inquiries from a search committee member within 24 hours at the most.

If you have a LinkedIn profile, include the URL in your contact information. If you don't have a LinkedIn profile, you should create one. Make sure to search online to learn about best practices for your LinkedIn profile.

If you have a Twitter handle and use it to "tweet" (even occasionally) about things related to education, include that handle in the contact information section. Make sure your Twitter feed is free of embarrassing tweets.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

This is the most important section of your resume and usually appears at the top of your resume just beneath contact information.

The best predictor of future success at a job, especially in a school, is past success at a similar job. Therefore, search committee members care most about experience that is relevant to what they are looking for. It is also sometimes the case that experience in non-formal educational settings like camp and any work you've done with children can help advance your candidacy.

Include any jobs or experiences you've had that relate directly to the job at the school to which you are applying. On your resume, we recommend that you focus on your accomplishments in each job, not your tasks and responsibilities. Don't use phrases like "responsible for," when describing your responsibilities. Instead, tell people what you did. Be VERY SPARING with bullet points; they are the items that most often bloat a resume and that are most often glossed over by the search committee members. Save bullet points for your LinkedIn profile. Try to limit the number of bullet points you list for each job to 3 or 4. You should list all of your relevant jobs, including those you held at the beginning of your career, but you don't need to include bullet points from anything further back than seven years ago.

You can also include related experience you gained outside of schools that is directly related to the work you'll do in the school, especially if it involves working with children. Common related experiences are serving on *shul* boards as well as leadership positions in camp and youth groups.

Don't include information in this section that just fills the page. The search committee doesn't need to know that you worked as a *mashgiach*. It's great that you're a hard worker and that you know about *hashgacha*, but it's probably not relevant to what you'll be doing as a leader in the school. You can tell the search committee about your other work experience on your LinkedIn profile or when you meet in person. If you have had work experience that may be relevant because you learned transferable skills (training, managing, supervising, etc.), use your judgment about whether to include these. Usually, less is more on a resume.

If you are listing multiple jobs at the same school here are a few guidelines to follow.

1. List the school one time with the full date range you worked at the school.
2. Then, list each job title with the dates you were in that role.
3. Under each role, list your accomplishments- the goal here is to show progression of what you've been working on over time. In most cases, the current job has the most relevant accomplishments and the earliest one has the least. You may choose to list accomplishments under each role or just under the most recent role. Look for examples of this in the sample resumes below.

EDUCATION and CERTIFICATIONS

This section is the second most important on your resume since search committees make reasonable judgments about you based on your academic career. List the name of school, city, state, degree, month, year (or expected year) of graduation, and any academic honors you received. Do not list the dates of attendance unless the time spent did not result in a degree or certificate. For example, time in Yeshiva or Seminary should be listed with the dates of attendance rather than the graduation date.

Any additional training you have that is relevant to the work you'd do in a school can be listed here. If you took professional development courses or leadership training outside of your normal work like certificate courses through the YUSP or another provider, list those.

If you have a certification, like a teaching license, include the state and date of certification or expected certification.

Do not include your high school on your resume. Do include any study you did in Yeshiva or Seminary. If you did this as part of your undergraduate degree, you can list it as a Study Abroad experience or you can list it separately. That's a matter of taste.

SKILLS, ACTIVITIES, INTERESTS

Although most of school leadership takes place in person, in the hallways, on the phone, and around conference tables and NOT in front of a computer screen, search committees still care about your technical skills including your proficiency with technology.

Even though it might be assumed that you have basic computer skills, it's still helpful to list the programs that you're skilled in, especially if your skills extend beyond MS (Microsoft) Word and include the ability to train others. List any iPad apps that you're comfortable using in an educational setting like Evernote and ScreenChomp. If you have facility with iMovie or other special software, let people know on your resume. If you have SmartBoard training (although this training recently has become less relevant) or have worked with an LMS (Learning Management System), you should list that, too.

If you speak any languages other than English reasonably well, you should list those.

In addition to your hard skills, we've found that Jewish day school search committees want to know about your activities and interests as well. They care what you do in your spare time since it helps them identify some of the "soft skills" that can't be discerned easily from other areas of your resume. Soft skills include things like work ethic, positive attitude, good communication skills, time management abilities, problem-solving skills, acting as a team player, self confidence (not hubris), flexibility/adaptability, and the ability to accept and learn from criticism.

Do you serve on a board? Do you have a leadership role? What types of *chesed* are you engaged in? Do you have any special interests like stamp collecting, scuba diving, creative writing, or music? All of these can be listed. If you've won any awards or commendations, you can list these as well. If you've published an article in anything other than your school's newsletter, list that, especially if it is something that relates to education.

REFERENCES

The end of your resume shouldn't end with the phrase, "References available upon request." Search committees assume you have references, so this phrase just states the obvious. In fact, we generally recommend that you leave references off your resume when applying to leadership positions. Unlike teacher hiring, leadership searches typically begin with an assurance of confidentiality to the candidates. Eventually, finalists for leadership positions will become public,

but not until late in the process when the risk of revealing their candidacy is worth the potential reward. For this reason, it's not necessary to provide references during the application phase.

When the search committee does request references, you should provide at least three. These referees should be people who know your professional work, not just your local rabbi or a family friend. If you have only one professional reference, you could include a professor as a second reference.

You should include the referee's name, current position (former position if you worked with this person when s/he served in a different capacity), organization or school, email and phone number. Make sure to contact your referees before listing them to make sure that they are willing to serve as referees for you.

A word to the wise: almost any school you apply to will contact your current and past employers as well as others who may know you to learn about you, even if you don't suggest those people as your referees, so be prepared for this. It will almost always serve you best to let your current employer know that you are applying for other jobs so that s/he isn't surprised when a search committee member calls to ask about you.

OTHER CATEGORIES

You might consider adding other categories or reorganizing the suggested categories above if they are large. Other category ideas: leadership activities, honors, professional development, memberships, other certification (CPR, First Aid, etc.). Just make sure your resume doesn't get unwieldy.

RESUME LENGTH

It is not necessary to squish all your accomplishments and education onto one page. One and a half to two pages is the norm for Jewish day school leadership resumes. Don't go beyond two; if you have, you should cut out things that are not absolutely essential. You've got a LinkedIn profile where you can include more detail.

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE

- **An objective.** Search committees don't read Objectives, and the statements don't make a search committee want to call you. An objective states what you want, while the school wants to hear what you offer. If you feel you must include something, include a Profile that briefly (one or two sentences) explains who you are. Make sure it is actually unique and reveals your individual character and is not a mashup of buzz words like "process-oriented" or "proven success." It's really better not to include anything like this at all.
- **Stuff from high school.** What you did in high school is largely irrelevant to a search committee, unless you attended the school you are applying to. One might argue that it can be valuable to include academic honors one received in high school (valedictorian or merit scholarships). Use your judgment, but don't include activities and other things from that time in your life.

- **Personal information.** Don't include information about your family or a photo of yourself. The committee can find a photo of you on your LinkedIn profile.
- **Too many bullet points.** Your resume is the briefest of snapshots. It is not a place to describe everything you've ever done in detail. Usually, three or four bullet points is all you need for the most important work on your resume. You'll be able to describe your work in more detail during an interview.
- **Punctuation and grammar mistakes.** A resume with mistakes signals to the committee that the candidate is not attentive to detail and will be prone to other errors on the job. Have a trusted friend read over your resume to make sure it's perfect.
- **The phrase, "References available upon request."** You should probably not include references on your resume when applying to a leadership position. Even though you're leaving them out, it's unnecessary to state that you'd provide references if they're requested since that's obvious.
- **Exaggerations.** Your resume is meant to make you look attractive to a school, but it should not misrepresent what you've done. Be realistic, and use strong, descriptive language to highlight your accomplishments.

RESUME TIPS

- ☼ Use present tense for current activities and past tense for previous activities. See examples in the sample resumes below.
- ☼ Speak about yourself in the first person (not third), but don't use the word "I" (e.g. "Evaluate formative assessments to inform lesson plans for the next day" instead of "Evaluates formative...").
- ☼ Don't use periods (it's technically acceptable, but not the norm for Jewish day schools).
- ☼ Make sure your email address is professional-sounding (e.g. FirstName.LastName@gmail.com). Cutesy and playful emails, even those that you think might highlight your passion for education, are not recommended (e.g., FavoriteTeacherShira@gmail.com).
- ☼ Don't repeat skills or accomplishments from job to job; mention them once per resume.
- ☼ Try to keep your resume to two pages. It really doesn't need to be longer and doesn't make a good impression if it is.
- ☼ Use keywords appropriate to your area: portfolio assessment, standards-based, manipulatives, supervision, etc.
- ☼ Focus on accomplishments, not responsibilities.
- ☼ Use an attractive, readable font no smaller than 11 pt.
- ☼ Do not stretch the margins to make your resume fit on one page. Reduce content instead.

- ☼ Email your resume as a PDF, not a Word document.
- ☼ Customize your resume for every school and every position. If you want a job, you must invest time and energy into getting one.
- ☼ See our sample resumes below, but don't copy them.
- ☼ Connect with the YU School Partnership office throughout your job search; search committees ask us about you, so it's helpful if you're connected.

THE COVER LETTER

The cover letter, which should be addressed to the school's Search Committee, is a bit different than what you might be used to. The cover letter is NOT about you, although that might sound counter-intuitive. Rather it's about the "match" between you and the school. We recommend including two major parts.

The first part of the letter should focus on why you're passionate about Jewish educational leadership (2 - 3 paragraphs). You may have written an educational philosophy statement at one point. You may mine this for nuggets that should be included in your cover letter, but make sure what you include isn't generic-sounding and relates to what the search committee is looking for in a leader.

The rest of the letter (3 - 5 paragraphs) should focus specifically on something you saw in the school's opportunity statement that resonates with you and your passion for leading. Elaborate on it by providing an example of how it plays out in your leadership or how you might see it being accomplished. If it's authentic to your style, you could use an anecdote to illustrate.

The first part of your cover letter may remain mostly the same from school to school. The second part of the letter must be customized for each school that you're applying to. Spend time on this document. Search committees read them very carefully and scrutinize them for evidence of your ability to express yourself, your understanding of the school and the role, and for your potential "fit."

Remember that our staff is here to help you. Please reach out to us and share your application material drafts with us before you submit them. We'll gladly provide feedback and support you through the application process.

SAMPLE RESUMES BELOW

CHANA "CHANI" PLONISTEIN

123 Number Drive, Teaneck, NJ 07666

(212) 221-1112 | Chani.Plonistein@gmail.com

 www.linkedin.com/in/ChaniPlonistein  Twitter: @ChaniPloni

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Generic Jewish Day School, Paramus, NJ

Assistant Principal, Judaic Studies, Grades 1 - 8 2012 - Present

- Collaborated with leadership team to create an updated educational vision for our school with specific and measurable outcomes for our curricula and classrooms
- Systematized teacher supervision and observation for 15 JS faculty members aligned with JNTP teaching standards and Kim Marshall's observation framework
- Designed process for monitoring student academic and personal progress in collaboration with leadership team, grade advisors, and guidance department
- Achieved over \$10,000 savings in Judaic Studies budget in collaboration with leadership team through efficiencies in personnel including expanding teacher leadership, and streamlining programmatic offerings

Tanach Department Chair, Grades 1 - 8 2009 - 2012

- Completed multi-year review of Tanach curriculum resulting in vertical and horizontal mapping of units
- Spear-headed school-wide implementation of UbD unit planning framework through embedded, ongoing professional development and individualized support for faculty

Middle School Judaic Studies Teacher and Teacher Mentor 2007 - Present

- *Experimented with a variety of educational technology solutions to improve the student learning experience and trained colleagues in their implementation*
- Introduced formative assessment models to increase growth-oriented feedback

Community Modern Orthodox Day School, Midwest City, OH

Judaic Studies Teacher, Grades 4 – 8 2004 - 2007

MS Math Teacher 2004

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Camp Rock, Middle of Nowhere, PA

Rosh Chinuch Summers 2002 - 2006

Chinuch Staff Summers 2000 - 2001

Madricha Summers 1998 - 1999

Bnei Akiva of North America

Advisor 1998 - 2003

EDUCATION

Yeshiva University, New York, NY

Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration

EdD in Educational Leadership

Expected 2017

Stern College for Women

BA in Jewish Studies (cum laude)

May 2002

YU School Partnership, New York, NY

YU Lead Leadership Training Program

2013 – 2014

Bank Street College of Education, New York, NY

MA in Curriculum and Instruction

May 2005

Michlalah, Jerusalem, Israel

1999 - 2000

PRESENTATION AND PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

A Systems Approach: Teacher Supervision, Presentation at North American Jewish Day School Conference, 2013

“Generating Meaning in *Tanakh* for the iGeneration: Using ‘Enduring Understandings’ to Create *Tanakh* Units,” in *Jewish Educational Leadership* 10:2, Spring, 2012.

“Forget Your Smart Board: Using BYOD Programs to Increase Student Engagement in Jewish Studies Classrooms,” in *Jewish Educational Leadership* 9:1, Fall, 2010

RABBI MOSHE PLONIBERG

123 Tree Species Road, Los Angeles, CA, 90035
mploniberg@gmail.com ♦ (310) 867-5309

Professional Experience

Jewish High School, Spanish Word, CA

Student Activities Director 2013 – Present

Teacher and 10th Grade Level Advisor 2010 – Present

- Proposed and implemented streamlined programmatic calendar that eliminated unsuccessful programs and consolidated smaller programs into thematic events
- Strategically envisioned and executed first-of-their-kind programs that resulted in deeper student and faculty engagement (e.g. “Little *Ohel* on the Prairie”)
- Managed faculty by communicating and overseeing teacher roles during programs
- Improved “school to home” communication through use of website, database, weekly updates, Google calendars, and teacher training

Southern Jewish Day School, Football Country, TX

Teacher, High School Judaic Studies 2005 – 2010

Education

YU School Partnership, New York, NY

YU Lead Leadership Training Program 2015 – 2016

Yeshiva University, New York, NY

RIETS

Semicha Yoreh Yoreh May 2005

Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration

MS in Jewish Education May 2003

Yeshiva College

BA in Psychology May 2001

Yeshivat Shaalvim, Nof Ayalon, Israel

1997 – 1998

Skills, Activities, Interests

- Languages: Hebrew (advanced), Spanish (intermediate)
- Music: Guitar and Songleading
- Volunteer Activities: Board Member, Millennium Mile Shul; Meals on Wheels
- Sports: Surfing; Soccer Coach (12 – 14 year olds)