

Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School

Head of School Candidate Profile

SPECIFIC STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

With guidance from a thoughtful and reflective new strategic plan, in partnership with our Board of Directors, faculty and staff, and with the support of our families, the new Head of School will work to accomplish the following within the next five years:

Envision and create facility and funding plan for expansion of K-8 enrollment.

The current space owned by Akiba-Schechter is insufficient for the current enrollment of 161 K-8 students, and this level of enrollment is below the optimal number. (The preschool, which is at its desired size of about 108 students, has sufficient space.) We rent space from a neighboring synagogue to meet our current needs for K-8 students, but this is not a long-term solution. We seek a Head of School who will envision and coordinate a recruitment and retention plan to grow the K-8 enrollment by 30% or more. In addition, the Head of School will need to create a facility and funding plan to accommodate the growing needs of the School.

Develop culture of philanthropy among all stakeholders.

Gifts to Akiba-Schechter have made our growth possible, and an ever broadening and deeper philanthropic program will be necessary for us to sustain and grow our School in the years ahead. We seek a Head of School who will passionately and effectively tell the story of why Akiba-Schechter matters and why it should be the beneficiary of support from our broadly defined collection of stakeholders.

Enhance and distinguish the Judaic studies program.

We seek a Head of School who will work to ensure excellence in academic quality across the curriculum with extra attention to our Judaic studies program, which is aligned with the approach of many Modern Orthodox school Judaic studies programs. An enriched Judaic studies program will have pedagogy of active engagement consistent with the general studies program, communication of clear and rigorous goals for both skills and values acquisition in all subjects, and meaningful respect for diverse beliefs and practices within the Akiba-Schechter family.

Improve technology integration.

Akiba-Schechter faculty and staff have a measured approach to technology using it more often as a tool for learning or communication rather than an end in itself. We seek a Head of School with a vision for how better to integrate technology into our academic programs for its own sake, in addition to the myriad ways it can boost the innovative educational and administrative experiences for our students, teachers and families.

Oversee accreditation from independent body.

In an effort to establish and meet standards for excellence in all operations at Akiba-Schechter, we plan to achieve additional accreditation from a reputable independent body, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). We seek a Head of School who will embrace, steer and oversee the accreditation process that will include a comprehensive self-study and an intensive site visit with a repeat of the process at regular intervals.

MAJOR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS

Job Responsibility	Skills and Tasks
Implementing school mission and strategic plan	Communicate and uphold mission with teachers, students, and community; uphold School hashkafa, including meaningful respect for diverse religious beliefs and practices within the Akiba-Schechter family
Student/family recruitment and retention	Outreach to community and “in-reach” to current students and family; collaborate with admissions and marketing personnel
Hiring faculty and staff	Recruit, interview, and select K-8 staff and negotiate with all staff
Supervising faculty and staff	Manage senior staff, including Director of Judaic Studies, Director of General Studies (proposed), Pre-School Director, Director of Operations, and Director of Advancement (proposed); systematize staff development and evaluation including observation, feedback and mentoring
Oversee operations and budget	Basic budgeting and facility planning; align budget with school’s values; supervise and evaluate Director of Operations
Oversee preschool	Supervise and evaluate Preschool Director; support the mission and vision of the Preschool and Kindergarten
Oversee school advancement	Collaborate with development, marketing, communications and admissions personnel on strategy; be a passionate ambassador for why the school matters and merits support; actively participate in fundraising solicitations; supervise and evaluate Director of Advancement

Oversee academic programs	Coordinate and help integrate General and Judaic studies; promote and support innovation and risk-taking among teachers; hire, supervise and evaluate Director of Judaic Studies and Director of General Studies
Board Development	Forge a strong partnership with the board in achieving the school's mission

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Candidates should welcome the chance to be an integral part of the Akiba-Schechter family and the Chicago Jewish community as a whole. The Head of School will be expected to have regular interaction with and be accessible to all of the School's stakeholders, including students. Other characteristics that will stand the Head in good stead include:

Characteristic	The leader is able...
Culture	To foster a sense of family, community, cooperation, and respect
Approach to and Knowledge of Education	To make discussion of current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices a regular aspect of the school's culture To support an educational environment that accommodates to meet children's needs and follow a child-centered approach, focuses on learning to love to learn as much as acquiring knowledge, and empowers teachers to be creative within a set of core pedagogical principles
Communication	To establish strong lines of communication with all stakeholders
Focus/Vision	To establish clear goals and keep goals and progress in the forefront of the school's attention
Emotional Intelligence	To monitor and react appropriately (e.g. with warmth, caring) to his/her own and others' emotions and relationships

The importance of these qualities cannot be overstated. In recent focus groups of parents, teachers, staff, students, alumni, and donors, school leaders consistently heard that these

qualities are central to the leadership at Akiba-Schechter. These are considered essential qualities we seek in our next Head of School.

Interested candidates are encouraged to contact our search consultants at YUSP, Rabbi Maccabee Avishur (avishur@yu.edu) and Dina Rabhan (rabhan@yu.edu), to confidentially discuss the opportunity and the process.

Applicants should submit no later than October 29, the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in leading Akiba-Schechter
- A current résumé

These materials should be transmitted via email attachment to the one of the two email addresses above.