

Pardes Alumni Support Project: Theory of Change

PROBLEMS

Shortage of qualified Judaic teachers in JDS a function of problems with both recruitment and retention

Difficulty attracting teachers to the field when induction conditions are known to be suboptimal

Retaining new teachers can be as challenging as recruiting and preparing them

Beginning teachers encounter tremendous challenges when they transition into new roles, no matter how extensive their preparation

Experiencing the reality of the classroom, the demands of a career in teaching, and the constraints of working in an established school climate can lead to anxiety, feelings of failure, isolation, or disillusionment, which can reduce commitment to JDS teaching and lead to attrition

New teachers do not get adequate support from their schools

New teachers do not always know how to get their needs met or how to access support and resources

Even after the first three years, many JDS teachers do not demonstrate high levels of career commitment

Early adulthood is a time of many personal transitions such as marriage, parenthood, relocation for economic or social reasons, and pursuit of continuing education; each decision point can result in attrition from Jewish day school teaching.

KEY STRATEGIES

Provide external source of support and guidance through early years of induction

Dual intervention: group programming + individual coaching

Leverage existing relationships of alumni with each other and Pardes staff

Create opportunities and norms of peer support for professional and personal challenges that might otherwise lead to attrition from field

Flexible intervention that is responsive to needs of individuals

Provide career support through individual counseling and coaching, especially at vulnerable points such as early months in a new school and times of personal transition or relocation

Fortify the sense of belonging to a community of committed and thoughtful Jewish educators

Provide continued learning (content and pedagogy) to enhance teaching quality and professionalism, and to leverage participants' love of Torah study to maintain morale and renew commitment to teaching.

TARGET CONSTITUENCIES

Alumni of the Pardes Educators Program (PEP), who have already invested in professional preparation and demonstrated strong commitment to a career in Jewish education:

PEP alumni who are teaching in the Jewish day school classroom

PEP alumni who are involved in Jewish education in a role other than day school teacher

PEP alumni who are on hiatus from teaching but plan to return

PEP alumni who are no longer committed to teaching / Jewish education

PROCESS BENCHMARKS (ANNUAL)**Group programming:**

North American retreat

Summer curriculum workshop in Jerusalem

Conference calls

Newsletter

Listserv

Individual coaching:

School site visits by staff

Phone, email, and face-to-face contact with alumni

Connecting newer alumni with veteran alumni who can support them with their individual challenges

OUTCOMES (AT THE END OF 5 YEARS)

Site visits help alumni adjust and improve teaching

Site visits help alumni manage new roles and relationships

Programmatic elements well received by alumni

Alumni feel supported by the program staff and each other

Alumni in transition receive effective career counseling and make choices that increase likelihood of retention

Alumni demonstrate positive attitudes towards Jewish education as career

Alumni report renewed commitment to stay in the field

Alumni have successful, positive experiences as new teachers

Alumni report growth in their resilience, confidence, coping styles, self efficacy, and teaching competence, and they attribute this to the program

Alumni report teaching beliefs and practices that reflect Pardes values and standards of competent teaching

Supervisors of alumni report positive impact of program on alumni teaching practices and induction

Project learns more about needs of alumni in the field and develops additional modalities of support and guidance.

LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES

Sustained commitment to the field of Jewish education

Continued growth and improvement as teachers

Dispositions and beliefs that support high quality teaching