

**Growth and Change in Day School Financial Vitality:
A JData Benchmarking Project
September 15, 2016**

INTRODUCTION

Benchmarking is standard practice for organizations that seek to improve their performance. It measures an organization against “best in class” and shows where it stands in comparison to others. It helps an organization assess its own data and determine what merits celebration and what is cause for concern. By showing the organization what is possible in its field of practice, benchmarking can motivate leadership to strive for higher results.

JData introduced a benchmarking tool for Jewish day schools in 2014-15 and carried it forward in 2015-16. Focused on budget and finances, the two years of data from the JData benchmarking project give a first picture of trends in the schools’ vital financial statistics. These data enable each school to see whether their own rate of growth places them at the top of their class or further down the line. The data also draw the big picture of the field, a much needed resource for the stakeholders who care about the strength and sustainability of the day school system.

Method

The benchmarking project is designed for schools that have each of the following: Jewish and secular educational offerings, a governing board, and a website. Of the 299 eligible schools, 152 participated in the first year of the project and 155 participated in the second year. Change measures reported herein are based on the nearly 100 schools that participated in both years.

The sample is largely schools in the United States but also includes 12 Canadian schools. Throughout the report, the nine schools in Eastern Canada are included in the Northeast count, and the three in Western Canada are included in the West count. Figures reported in Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on the average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16). Appendix A provides further information on the sample of schools in participating in 2015-16.

The project was designed for efficiency—using a small number of data points to generate a large amount of information. Schools entered data on 13 items (e.g., total enrollment, total operating expenses, total annual fundraising). These data in turn yielded a set of metrics for comparing across schools (e.g., cost per student, dollars raised per student). In addition, the Year 2 analysis examined the degree of change between current and past years’ figures and metrics, essentially doubling the amount of information to be gleaned from the project.

Data reported herein were exported from www.jdata.com on May 20, 2016.

Basic Principles as Seen Through Enrollment

Enrollment itself is not a measure of financial vitality, but it is implicated in all of the measures presented in this report. Enrollment also illustrates four basic principles about the benchmarking data.

1. *Look beyond averages.* On average, there appears to have been no change in enrollment from 2014-15 to 2015-16 (Table 1). However, when we look within schools, we see a more complex and perhaps troubling pattern. Only 8% of the schools show static enrollment (+/- 1%). Half of the schools show a decline in enrollment and 42% show growth.

Table 1: Change in Enrollment (2014-15 to 2015-16)

<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
135	-49%	+93%	0%

2. *Consider rates of growth.* Growing schools are not doing so at the same rate. Most grew by two to nine percentage points, but 23 (of 56 schools in growth mode) grew by ten to twenty percentage points or more. The same holds true for schools that lost enrollment.
3. *Consider region and identification.* For example, on average, enrollment declined the most in the Midwest (-4%) while greatest growth was in the West (+5%). However, as cautioned above, within each region some schools declined while others grew. In the Midwest, 67% of the schools lost students while 28% gained students. In the West, 41% lost while 49% grew. In short, schools sometimes beat their regional averages.
4. *Size matters.* With regard to most measures of infrastructure and finance, large schools have advantages, and small schools appear most vulnerable. Enrollment in the largest schools grew by 5% on average while enrollment in the smallest schools declined by 2% on average. As above, the average can effectively mask individual differences. Drilling down one level, we see that just over 30% of the very large schools lost students during this period and 40% of the very small schools gained students.

On most measures, the field-wide average looks virtually the same as it did last year. However, the great majority of schools that saw change in their numbers belies the overall view. Because the forest and the trees tell two different stories, the benchmarking report presents results in four ways: (1) North American averages; (2) averages by region, school identification and size; (3) percentages of schools changing at different rates; and (4) percentiles. The latter are in Appendix B and are specifically intended for benchmarking.

DATA OVERALL

Table 2 offers a summary of key metrics from the JData benchmarking project. Details on these data are presented in the Data Drill Down section below.

Table 2: Summary of Key Measures

2015-16 Key Measures	Average	<i>n</i>
Percent capacity utilization	76%	152
Cost per student	\$21,300	148
Total expenses covered by total revenues	94%	147
Percent of revenues from tuition	76%	150
Average financial aid award	\$9,300	147
Percent students receiving aid	58%	147
Annual campaign dollars raised	\$700,000	142
Annual campaign dollars raised per student	\$2,900	142
Endowment fund valuation	\$3,870,000	96
Endowment fund valuation per student	\$13,100	96
Change from 2014-15 to 2015-16	Average percent change	
Capacity utilization	+3%	115
Cost per student	+4%	103
Total revenue	+9%	107
Average financial aid award	+3%	102
Annual campaign dollars raised	+23%	86
Endowment fund valuation	+25%	66
Schools with Increases from 2014-15 to 2015-16	Percent of schools	
Capacity utilization	44%	115
Cost per student	56%	103
Total revenue	57%	107
Average financial aid award	52%	102
Annual campaign	55%	86
Endowment fund valuation	55%	66

All dollars are rounded to the nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

DATA DRILL DOWN

This section highlights findings in five areas key to financial performance. These areas interact with one another, and together are essential to a well-functioning school.

1. Capacity utilization
2. Expenses (cost per student)
3. Revenues (including tuition collected)
4. Financial aid
5. Development

Capacity Utilization

Capacity utilization is calculated as the number of students enrolled in the school divided by the number of students the school could have served given its space and staff. Unused capacity is expensive. When enrollment drops, capacity utilization decreases along with tuition income. Fixed overhead costs, however, remain largely the same. Thirty percent unused capacity is considered the minimum sustainable level. Approximately 70% of the schools in the benchmarking project are in the safety zone. (See Table 3 for summary statistics.)

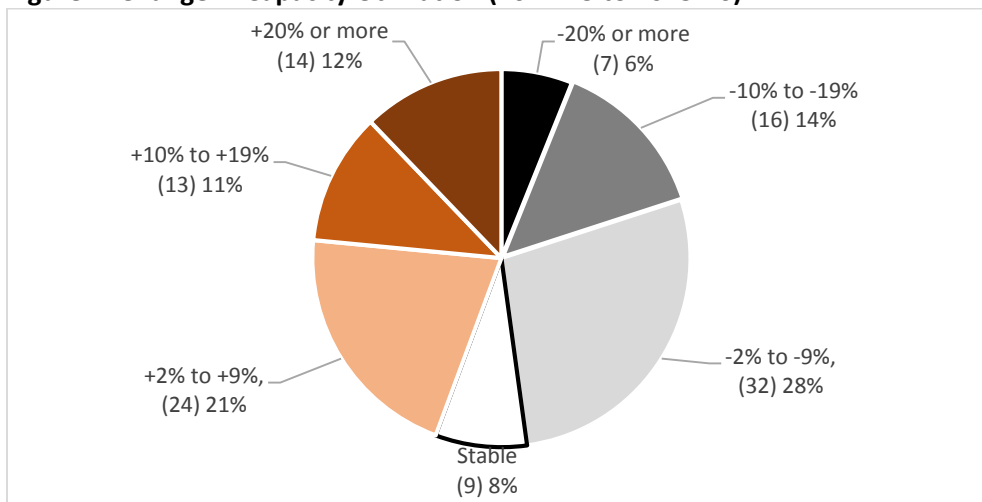
Table 3: Capacity Utilization Summary Statistics

	<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Capacity utilization 2015-16	152	65%	100%	76%
Change in capacity utilization 2014-15 to 2015-16	115	-47%	+113%	+3%

- There is little variance in average capacity utilization rates by school identification or region. The one exception is schools in the West, which show an average noticeably above the continental average and above the averages of schools in other regions.
- Capacity utilization consistently varies by school size, with the smallest schools having the lowest levels. On average, schools with fewer than 100 students are using only 60% of their capacity, one indicator of the fragility of the two-digit school.

On average, schools showed a 3% improvement in capacity utilization from 2014-15 to 2015-16 (Table 3). Take one step back, however, and the figures tell a different story: 48% of the schools had *lower* rates of capacity utilization than previous while 44% had *higher* rates. The other 8% of schools held their rates steady (+/-1%). Figure 1 provides a finer breakdown of degree of change.

Figure 1: Change in Capacity Utilization (2014-15 to 2015-16)



n=115 schools

Table 4 shows capacity utilization by school identification and region. In reading these numbers, note that the average percentage change (Column 2) tells one story while the percentage of schools experiencing improvement or decline (Columns 3-5) tells a different story. Take, for example, the Orthodox schools. On average, these schools had noticeable improvement in capacity utilization (+6%), yet the number of schools declining was close to the number improving. Another example is the Conservative schools which, on average, showed modest improvement (+2%). Nonetheless, for the majority of these schools, the experience was one of loss not gain.

Table 4: Change in Capacity Utilization by Denomination and Region (2014-15 to 2015-16)
In descending order by % of schools improving

<i>Identification</i>	Average Percent Change	Percent of Schools		
		Declined	Stable	Improved
Reform (n=8)	+10%	25%	0%	75%
Community/pluralist (n=51)	0%	47%	6%	47%
Orthodox (n=32)	+6%	41%	16%	44%
Conservative (n=24)	+2%	67%	4%	29%
Region				
West (n=34)	+10%	35%	6%	59%
Northeast (n=38)	+1%	53%	5%	42%
South (n=26)	+2%	50%	8%	42%
Midwest (n=17)	-6%	59%	18%	24%
Overall (n=115)	+3%	48%	8%	44%

Not only do the smallest schools have the lowest rates of usage, but they also showed the least change from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Schools with fewer than 250 students, on average, showed no change in capacity utilization. Large schools (250-500 students) improved an average of 7% while the largest schools (over 500 students) improved by 4% on average.

One conclusion to be drawn from these numbers is that capacity utilization is not static. The great majority of schools showed a two to twenty percent (or more) change in their capacity utilization from one year to the next. Those showing no change represent the smallest percentage of schools. We know that capacity utilization can be improved by increasing enrollment through recruitment and/or retention efforts or by reducing capacity (by renting out space, re-structuring staff, etc.). The fact that capacity utilization is a dynamic number amenable to change should serve to encourage action.

Expenses

Cost per Student

Cost per student is calculated as total operating expenses divided by total enrollment. By looking at cost per student, it is possible to compare schools across different size categories.

Maintaining or reigning in the cost per student can stabilize a school's budget and help keep tuition in check. Table 5 presents summary statistics related to this metric.

Table 5: Cost per Student Summary Statistics (2015-16)

	<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Average cost per student (2015-16)	148	\$8,300	\$56,500	\$21,300
Percent change in operating expenses (2014-15 to 2015-16)	105	-41%	+92%	+3%
Percent change in cost per student (2014-15 to 2015-16)	103	-46%	+96%	+4%

Dollars rounded to nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

— Average cost per student is relatively similar across regions and school type. Differences by school size are also relatively narrow although the largest and smallest schools appear to have some advantage over other schools (Table 6).

Table 6: Average Cost Per Student by Enrollment (2015-16)

In ascending order

Total enrollment	
Small (less than 100 students)	\$18,200
Largest (500 or more students)	\$20,600
Large (250-499 students)	\$22,500
Medium (100-249 students)	\$22,900
Overall (n=148 schools)	\$21,300

Dollars rounded to nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

- Some 56% of schools saw higher costs per students in 2015-16 than they had the previous year. This change may be the result of lower enrollments and/or greater expenses. For about two-thirds of these schools, the increase was less than ten percent. The other schools saw increases of 10% to 20% or more.
- At the same time, a sizeable proportion of schools (41%) saw a reduction in per student costs. For one-fourth of these schools, the reduction was twenty percent or more.
- Rates of change vary by region, identification, and size. Increases were most common among the Conservative and Reform schools (just over 60% reporting an increase) and schools in the Midwest (69% showing an increase). Orthodox schools are the only category in which schools were more likely to have lowered than raised their per student costs.

- As compared with larger schools, the smallest schools saw the greatest increase in cost per student (+8% on average). Given that per-student-cost may be one of their advantages, this will be an important number to track over time.

Similar to capacity utilization, cost per student is a dynamic number, with only a small percentage of schools reporting no change from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Cost per student can be lowered by increasing enrollment and/or by controlling expenses. The latter is the more difficult as, on average, the cost of operating a school appears to be on a rising trajectory.

Revenues

Financially sustainable schools bring in sufficient revenues to cover annual operating costs, including both maintenance of the current program and the introduction of enhancements.

JData metrics are based on the contribution of tuition and fundraising to current-year revenues (Table 7). Note that there is a complex interplay among measures. For example, a decline in the percentage of revenues accounted for by tuition may mean that the school has raised more money through its fundraising efforts. The decline may also reflect lower enrollment or fewer families paying full tuition.

- On average, schools saw a 9% increase in revenues from 2014-15 to 2015-16 (Table 7). As in all matters, this gain was not universal. 57% of the schools saw gains, 3% held steady, and 40% saw declines in their total revenues.
- The greatest gains were in the Midwest (+28% on average) and West (+17% on average); among the Orthodox schools (+33% on average); and among schools with 250 to 500 students (+18% average growth). The only category of school to show declines in average revenue were those with over 500 students (-7%).

Gains or losses notwithstanding, on average, 93% of a school's operating expenses were covered by its various revenue streams in 2015-16. As seen in Table 7, the range is great. About one-third of the schools broke even or generated excess revenue.

Table 7: Sources of Revenue Summary Statistics (2015-16)

	<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Percent total expenses covered by total revenues	147	42%	107%	93%
Revenue Sources (2014-15)				
Tuition collected as a percent of revenues	150	14%	100%	76%
Tuition collected as a percent of expenses	147	14%	147%	71%
Annual campaign as a percent of expenses	135	0%	51%	14%

Change from Past Year (2014-15 to 2015-16)				
Percent change in total revenues	107	-87%	+484%	+9%
Percent change in tuition collected	106	-48%	+495%	+8%
Percent change in expenses covered by tuition	105	-40%	+559%	+6%
Percent change in fundraising	86	-88%	+569%	+23%

Tuition is central to the school budget. On average, it accounts for the largest share of revenues and, commensurately, covers the largest proportion of expenses. It is not surprising, therefore, that the average increase in revenue tracks increases in tuition collected.

— The greatest gains in tuition collected in 2015-16 were, on average, in the Orthodox schools and schools in the West and South (Table 8). In both categories, the average amount of increase (Column 2) and the percentage of schools seeing increases (Column 5) are significantly higher than continental averages or the averages of other categories of schools.

Table 8: Change in Tuition Revenue (2014-15 to 2015-16)

In descending order by % of schools increasing

<i>Identification</i>	Average Percent Change	Percent of Schools		
		Declined	Stable	Increased
Orthodox (n=28)	+32%	21%	7%	71%
Reform (n=9)	+1%	33%	0%	67%
Community/pluralist (n=46)	0%	43%	0%	57%
Conservative (n=23)	-4%	52%	9%	39%
<i>Region</i>				
West (n=33)	+20%	18%	9%	73%
South (n=23)	+4%	43%	0%	57%
Midwest (n=16)	+13%	50%	0%	50%
Northeast (n=34)	-4%	50%	3%	47%
Overall (n=106)	+8%	39%	4%	58%

— At least half of the schools in every size classification reported growth in their tuition collected. This was particularly noticeable in the 75% of the largest schools that reported an increase from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

— On average, the proportion of revenues coming from tuition declined by 3% from 2014-15 to 2015-16. About half of the reporting schools saw a decline in percent of revenues from tuition: 41% saw an increase and 10% saw no change.

Cash Reserves

Cash reserves help schools deal with short-term or emergency funding needs. Of 141 reporting schools, 59% had cash reserves and the others had none. Those with such funds, on average, held an amount equal to one or two months of operating costs¹ (Table 9).

Table 9: Number of Months Covered by Cash Reserves Summary (2015-16)

<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
83	<1	7.78	1.7

Note: Table does not include schools with \$0 cash reserves.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is an important piece of a school's financial picture. Financial aid is often a threshold issue for enrollment which, as noted above, is foundational to a school's vitality. Regardless of whether schools account for aid as a line-item expense or a reduction in revenues, financial aid equals about one-fourth of the school's budget on average (Table 10). The 150 reporting schools gave over \$235M in financial aid in 2015-16 alone, further highlighting the importance of ongoing resources for financial aid.

Table 10: Financial Aid Summary Statistics

	<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Average financial aid award	147	\$500	26,400	\$9,300
Total financial aid awarded	150	\$21,200	\$13,976,500	\$1,568,700
Financial aid as percent of expenses	146	1%	79%	26%

Dollars rounded to nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

There is generally little difference in financial aid numbers by region, identification, and size, with most numbers clustering close to the average. A few numbers are worth noting:

- Reform schools and schools in the South had the lowest average financial aid awards in comparison to continental averages (\$7,100 versus \$9,300) and averages for schools of other types or in other regions.
- The smallest schools gave financial aid packages well below the continental average (\$6,800 versus \$9,300) and the averages for schools of other sizes. These schools also had, on average, the highest percentage of students receiving aid (69%).

¹ Monthly operating cost was calculated as total operating expenses divided by 12.

- The total amount spent on financial aid increased, on average, by 9% between 2014-15 and 2015-16 (Table 11). The increase is seen in the averages for schools of all types (except Conservative), of all sizes, and in all regions.
- The overall trend notwithstanding, some schools decreased their total aid. Cuts in total aid are particularly noticeable in the Conservative schools and among schools in the South. Reductions may reflect smaller amounts awarded to each recipient, lower enrollment, or fewer families requiring aid.
- In terms of school size, the smallest schools had the greatest increase in the amount they spent on financial aid (+25% on average), at least five times that of the average for other school sizes.

Table 11: Change in Total Financial Aid Awarded by Identification and Region (2014-15 to 2015-16)
In descending order by % schools increasing

<i>Identification</i>	Average Percent Change	Percent of Schools		
		Declined	Stable	Increased
Community/pluralist (n=48)	+14%	31%	6%	63%
Reform (n=8)	+14%	38%	0%	63%
Orthodox (n=27)	+5%	41%	11%	48%
Conservative (n=23)	0%	52%	4%	43%
<i>Region</i>				
West (n=33)	+6%	24%	15%	61%
Midwest (n=16)	+12%	38%	6%	56%
Northeast (n=34)	+8%	44%	3%	53%
South (n=23)	+13%	52%	0%	48%
Overall (n=106)	+9%	39%	7%	55%

Financial aid as a percent of operating expenses increased by 12% on average. The increase is largely due to an increase in the total number of recipients, which rose by 17% on average. Over half of the schools reported a higher number financial aid awards in 2015-16 than they did in the previous year.

The average financial aid package increased by just 3%.

- There was no change in the average award in the West, an increase in the average award in the Midwest and South (+13% on average), and a decrease in the average award in the Northeast (-6% on average).
- On average, the only schools to increase their financial aid packages were those identified as Reform or community/pluralist. On average, Conservative and Orthodox schools held steady.

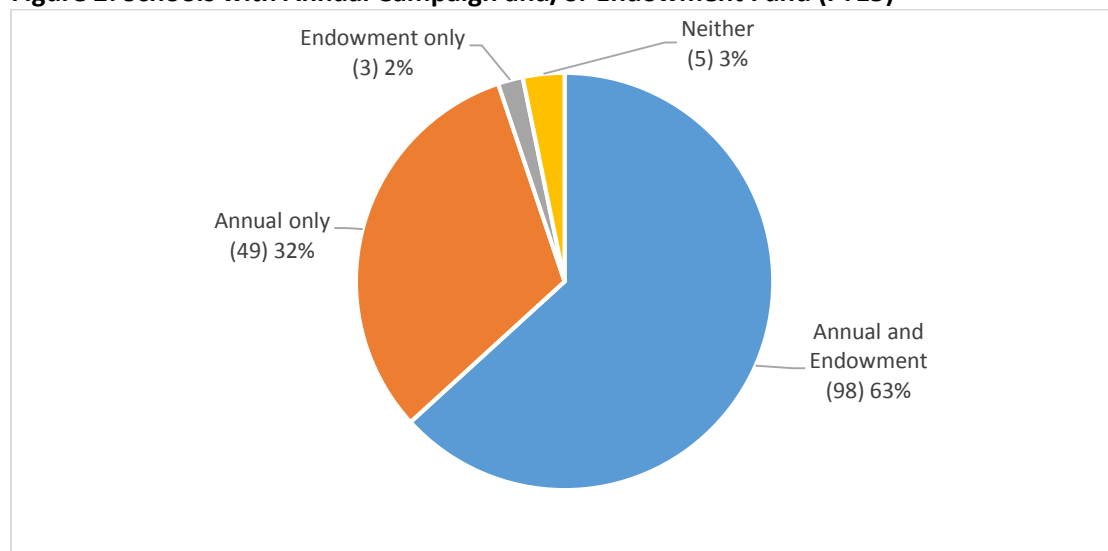
— The schools with fewer than 100 students reduced their financial aid packages by 10% on average. In comparison, the medium-sized schools increased their packages by 13% on average, and the large and largest increased their aid packages 2% and 5% respectively.

Development

Financially vital schools have an ongoing development function that includes both an annual campaign and an endowment fund.

Of the 155 schools in the benchmarking project, 95% had an annual campaign in FY15. The few that did not spanned all regions, sizes, and identifications (except Conservative. Some 65% of the 155 schools had an endowment fund. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Schools with Annual Campaign and/or Endowment Fund (FY15)



n=155 schools

Annual Campaign

In FY15, the average annual campaign brought in \$700,000 and the average endowment fund was valued at close to \$4M. As with all financial matters, the averages mask significant differences among schools (Table 12). Note, for example, lower development figures in the West as compared with other regions. Also note the high correlation between enrollment and development: The more students in a school, the larger the annual campaign and the greater the value of the endowment fund.

Table 12: Annual Campaign and Endowment: Overall and by Region, Identification, and Size (FY15)
In descending order by dollars raised

	Average		
	Annual campaign \$ raised	Annual campaign as % of revenue	Endowment fund value
Overall (n=142/138/96)	\$700,000	16%	\$3,870,000
Region			
Northeast (n=16/14/13)	\$810,800	15%	\$5,279,800
Midwest (n=52/51/37)	\$789,700	25%	\$5,135,300
South (n=35/35/24)	\$634,400	16%	\$2,323,500
West (n=39/38/22)	\$470,300	13%	\$1,672,700
Identification			
Orthodox (n=45/45/30)	\$882,600	16%	\$4,281,400
Conservative (n=27/27/22)	\$744,000	17%	\$6,643,100
Community/pluralist (n=46/43/32)	\$632,800	21%	\$2,942,000
Reform (10/10/5)	\$449,300	5%	\$1,315,900
Size (enrollment)			
Largest (500 or more) (n=21/21/17)	\$1,733,700	10%	\$8,380,000
Large (250-499) (n=38/38/29)	\$865,700	11%	\$6,194,200
Medium (100-249) (n=46/44/31)	\$483,400	15%	\$1,948,400
Small (>100) (n=37/35/19)	\$213,400	27%	\$786,500

Dollars are rounded to the nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

Endowment

Financially strong schools are growing their endowment funds through new gifts and smart investment of funds. On average, endowments grew by 25% from FY15 to FY16 and endowment per student grew by 38%. On average, highest rates of change were seen by the community/pluralist schools and schools in the South. However, note the relatively high percentage of Orthodox schools that grew their funds and the relatively high percentage of schools in the Midwest and West that did so as well (Table 13).

Table 13: Change in Endowment by Identification and Region (2014-15 to 2015-16)
In descending order by percent schools increasing endowment

<i>Identification</i>	Average Percent Change	Percent of Schools		
		Declined	Stable	Increased
Reform (n=4)	+3%	25%	0%	75%
Orthodox (n=18)	+23%	33%	6%	61%
Conservative (n=18)	+8%	28%	22%	50%
Community/pluralist (n=26)	+41%	31%	19%	50%
Region				
Midwest (n=11)	+27%	27%	9%	64%
West (n=19)	+24%	16%	21%	63%
South (n=12)	+73%	33%	17%	50%
Northeast (n=24)	+1%	42%	13%	46%
Overall (n=66)	+25%	30%	15%	55%

In terms of size, schools of 100 to 249 students showed the greatest gains in their endowments, increasing by 67% on average. All other categories of school size performed at a much lower level, showing between 5% and 8% growth in endowment on average.

Because of the connection between school size and development, annual fund per student and endowment per student are the metrics used for comparing endowment across different size schools. Table 14 shows summary statistics for these metrics.

Table 14: Change in Endowment and Annual Campaign per Student

	<i>Number of schools</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Endowment				
Valuation per student (FY15)	95	\$100	\$89,500	\$13,100
Percent change in valuation per student (FY15 to FY16)	66	-67%	+880%	+38%
Annual campaign				
Dollars raised per student (FY16)	142	\$15	\$13,300	\$2,900
Percent change in \$ raised per student (FY15 to FY16)	86	-88%	+912%	+31%

Dollars are rounded to the nearest \$100. Canadian dollars were converted to US dollars based on average exchange rate for the year (.86 in FY15 and .75 in FY16).

It should be noted that when enrollment declines, endowment per student rises. Also note that some schools have relatively small endowments. As such, relatively small increases in dollars can represent large percentage increases. For example, the school with the highest percentage increase in endowment per student went from \$8 per student to about \$80 per student. The

school's actual increase in total fund valuation was 17%, somewhat below the continental average.

CONCLUSION

The JData 2015-16 financial vitality data describe the current status of the day school world and compare it with the previous year. In addition to providing benchmarking for individual schools, the analysis draws a picture of the field writ large.

The 2015-16 results show overall change to be in the direction of growth. On average, schools increased in terms of capacity utilization, total revenue, total financial aid awarded and average size of financial aid awards, fundraising dollars, and endowment fund valuation. At the same time, schools also showed increases in total operating cost and cost per student.

As noted throughout, these increases are not across the board. On all of these measures (except capacity utilization), between 52% and 57% of schools enjoyed growth. The others did not. Consider, for example, day schools in the Midwest. Enrollment is declining in this region, with the result that this is the only region in which average capacity utilization declined from the prior year. This region also had the greatest increase in cost per student. Fortunately, the Midwestern schools, on average, had relatively high percentage increases in revenues.

In contrast, consider the West, a region in which enrollment is growing. As a result of higher enrollment numbers, average capacity utilization in the West was higher than in any other region of the country and showed the greatest improvement from the previous year. As well, schools in the West were the most likely to see an increase in the percentage of revenue from tuition collected. At the same time, the Western schools had, on average, the lowest figures for annual campaigns and endowment funds.

Results confirm commonsense notions about the vulnerability of schools with fewer than 100 students. In contrast to the overall continental pattern of growth, these schools saw a marginal decline in enrollment. Their average capacity utilization rate was and remains in the danger zone. These schools have the highest percentage of students receiving financial aid. In fact, the smaller the school, the more likely it is to have increased the number of financial aid recipients and the cost of financial aid as a percent of operating expenses. At the same time, the schools with enrollments under 100 have the lowest cost per student, a sign perhaps of their cost efficiency.

As shown in these examples, enrollment is a fundamental measure for day schools. Enrollment is implicated in most measures of financial sustainability as it is linked to capacity utilization, revenue from tuition, and cost of financial aid. Enrollment is also the denominator of every per student calculation. Schools with strong enrollment have a larger pool of parents and alumni to serve as ambassadors and supporters of the school. Public perception is that these schools are more successful and, as such, they become more attractive to prospective parents and to funders. For schools that do not enjoy these benefits, improvements in recruitment and retention might initiate a virtuous spiral of financial vitality.

Throughout this report, we presented data in various ways in order to serve the interests of different schools and stakeholders. Schools benefit from knowing where they stand in the field, in their region, within their size class, and among their peer schools. National organizations like Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools must understand the current status of the field as it sets its strategic priorities. Providers of day school initiatives need data to test the effectiveness of their interventions, and funders require data to know what capacity building is most needed and in which parts of the system. As we like to say at JData, the best data are data well used.

APPENDIX A

Benchmarking Sample (2015-16)

The benchmarking sample represents well the ecosystem of Jewish day schools. As seen in Table A1, a plurality of schools are Orthodox and a plurality are located in the Northeast. Average school size is over 300 students, with a distribution from fewer than 10 students to over 1,800 students. The sample mirrors that of Year 1 of the benchmarking project.

Table A1: Benchmarking Sample by Denomination, Region and Size

	Number	Percent	Continental ²
Region³			
Northeast	56	36%	66%
West	41	26%	12%
South	38	25%	13%
Midwest	20	13%	9%
Identification			
Community/pluralist	67	43%	14%
Orthodox	51	33%	79%
Conservative	27	17%	4%
Reform	10	6%	1%
Other	0	0%	2%
Enrollment			
Less than 100	41	26%	29%
100-199	32	21%	20%
200-299	30	19%	16%
300-399	19	12%	12%
400-499	10	6%	8%
500-999	17	11%	12%
1,000 or more	6	4%	3%
Total	155	100%	

Every region has multiple schools representing every denomination and every size. The only exception is the Midwest which has only one school with more than 500 students.

² Continental information comes from the following number of day schools in JData: Region=926 schools; denomination=881 schools; enrollment= 231 schools.

³ 12 Canadian schools participated in the 2015-16 project. The nine in Eastern Canada are included in the Northeast count; the three in Western Canada are included in the West count. Continental figures have included Canadian schools in a similar fashion.

APPENDIX B BENCHMARKING

This section of the report is intended for schools to assess where they stand vis-à-vis other Jewish day schools in the benchmarking project. The tables below show scores on capacity utilization, annual campaign per student, annual campaign as a percent of expenses, and endowment per student. In order to assess your school's score on these metrics, note the line where your school falls in the table. The percentile in Column 1 indicates your school's standing in the field.

Capacity Utilization

Financially vital schools are close to full capacity. As such, they can maximize their income from tuition and minimize the undue carrying cost of unused capacity.

Capacity Utilization in Percentiles

Percentile	Capacity utilization			Number of Schools
	From		To	
90-99 th	95.0%	--	more	17
80-89 th	92.0%	--	94.9%	15
70-79 th	87.6%	--	91.9%	15
60-69 th	83.5%	--	87.5%	15
50-59 th	79.1%	--	83.4%	15
40-49 th	73.5%	--	79.0%	14
30-39 th	68.0%	--	73.4%	15
20-29 th	62.5%	--	67.9%	15
10-19 th	47.5%	--	62.4%	16
0-9 th	10.0%	--	47.4%	15

Based on 152 reporting schools. Each category represents approximately 10% of schools.

Annual Campaign

Financially vital day schools have an annual campaign. Current use dollars from the campaign can fill the gap between expenses and revenue from tuition and support enhancements to the program. In schools at the top, the campaign raised the equivalent of several thousand dollars per student or covered over 20% of expenses.

Annual Campaign per Student in Percentiles

Percentile	Campaign \$\$ per Student			Number of Schools
	From		To	
90-99 th	\$5,520	--	more	15
80-89 th	\$4,300	--	\$5,519	14
70-79 th	\$3,350	--	\$4,299	14
60-69 th	\$2,750	--	\$3,349	15

50-59 th	\$2,200	--	\$2,749	14
40-49 th	\$1,760	--	\$2,199	14
30-39 th	\$1,450	--	\$1,759	14
20-29 th	\$1,060	--	\$1,449	14
10-19 th	\$460	--	\$1,059	14
0-9 th	\$10	--	\$459	14

Based on 142 reporting schools.

Annual Campaign as Percent of Expenses in Percentiles

Percentile	Campaign as % of Rev			Number of Schools
	From		To	
90-99 th	30.0%	--	more	14
80-89 th	23.0%	--	29.9%	14
70-79 th	16.0%	--	22.9%	13
60-69 th	12.6%	--	15.9%	13
50-59 th	10.6%	--	12.5%	13
40-49 th	9.0%	--	10.5%	12
30-39 th	7.0%	--	8.9%	13
20-29 th	5.0%	--	6.9%	12
10-19 th	3.0%	--	4.9%	13
0-9 th	>1%	--	2.9%	14

Based on 135 reporting schools.

Endowment

Endowment funds are permanent and therefore important to a day school's long-term financial prospects. Financially vital schools have an endowment fund valued at \$15,000 per student or more.

Endowment per Student in Percentiles

Percentile	Endowment/Student			Number of schools
	From		To	
90-99 th	\$30,900	--	more	10
80-89 th	\$21,000	--	\$30,899	10
70-79 th	\$15,400	--	\$20,999	9
60-69 th	\$8,600	--	\$15,399	10
50-59 th	\$5,400	--	\$8,599	10
40-49 th	\$4,300	--	\$5,399	9
30-39 th	\$3,100	--	\$4,299	10
20-29 th	\$1,700	--	\$3,099	9
10-19 th	\$500	--	\$1,699	10
0-9 th	\$80	--	\$499	9

Based on 95 reporting schools.