

JEWISH DAY SCHOOL BOARDS: SNAPSHOTS OF THE FIELD MARCH 2021



PRIZMAH

Center for Jewish Day Schools

An engaged and mission-driven board that is invested in continuous learning will serve your school well.

Designing a board development process starts with understanding your unique strengths and challenges. Assessing performance is the most effective way to lay the groundwork for helping your board members understand their duties and implement good governance practices.

Here is a snapshot of data collected through the Board Self-Assessment (BSA), a tool designed for Jewish day schools and administered by BoardSource in partnership with Prizmah. It is a leading practice for boards to engage in reflective self-assessment every 2-3 years. Boards that chose to take the BSA were focused on using the data to chart a path toward building a stronger board, using the survey as a catalyst for reflection and action.

The lay-head partnership is at the core of healthy schools that attract top talent and become places people want to serve. Working intentionally on the core leadership partnership is one of the most important investments school lay and professional leaders can make in service of strong schools.

WHY DO A BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT?

1

Lay the foundation for setting board development priorities.

2

Motivate board members, individually and collectively, to strengthen the full board's governance performance and practices.

3

Establish a common understanding of board roles and responsibilities.

4

Measure your board's performance against recognized roles and responsibilities.

5

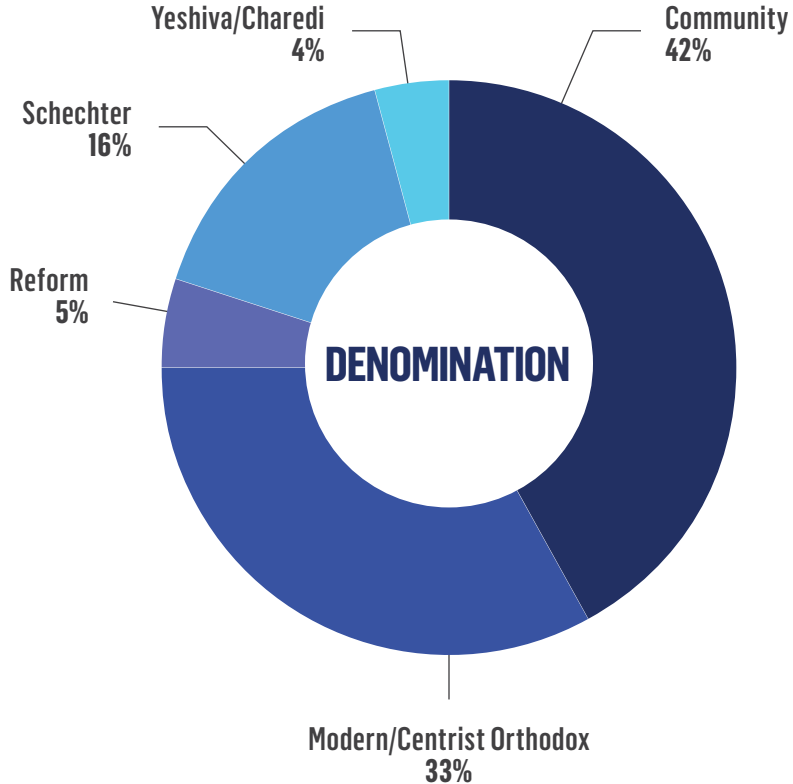
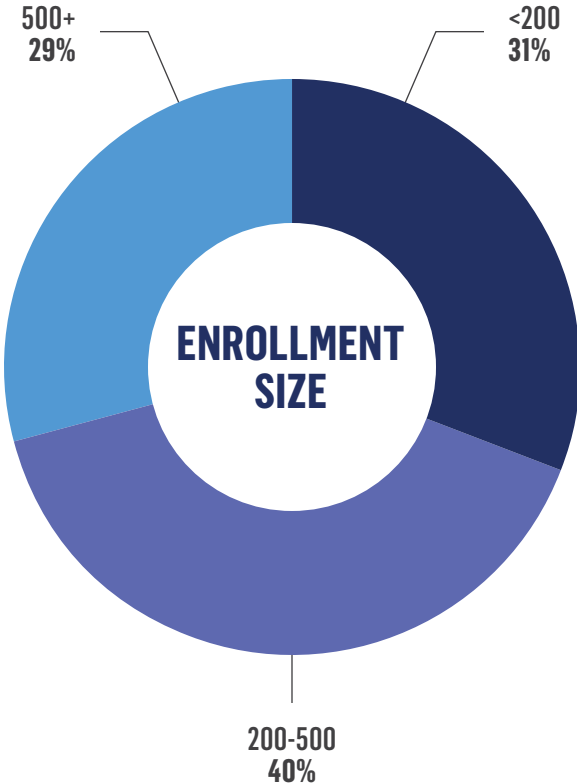
Move your board and board leaders to the next level of performance.

6

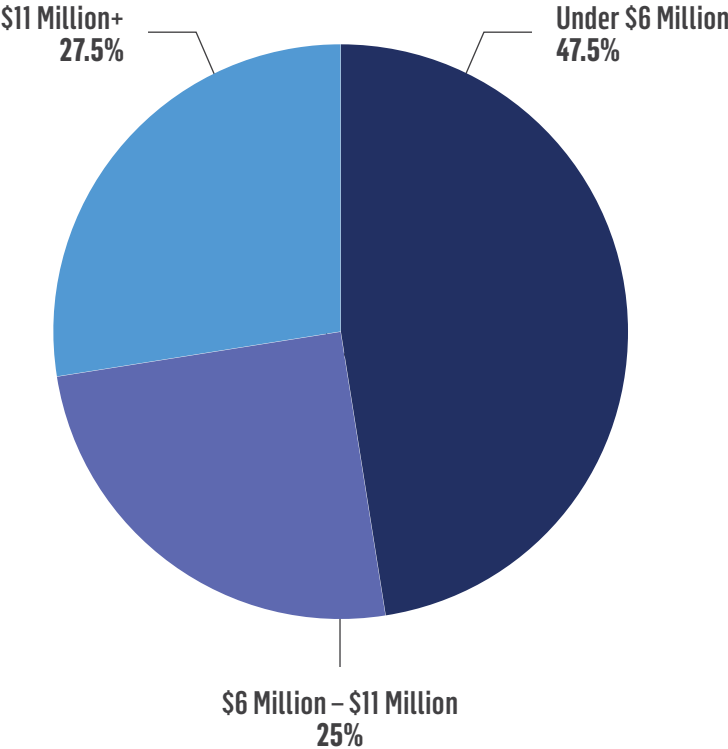
Serve as a starting point for transformative change throughout the school.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Between 2018 and 2019, over 40 schools across North America took the Board Self Assessment administered by BoardSource in partnership with Prizmah. The survey was completed by 735 board members and 44 heads of school.



SCHOOL BUDGET SIZE



MAJOR CHANGES IN THE LAST TWO YEARS

Initiative	Number of Schools
Launched a Major Initiative: Educational	23
Launched a Major Initiative: Building	16
Launched a Major Initiative: Capital	12
Hired a New Head of School	17
Completed a Strategic Plan	15
Downsized Operations (Staff, Sizing, etc.)	7
Merged or Combining With Another Organization	3

BOARD FINANCE PRACTICES

100%
OF SCHOOLS

Reported a Formally
Approved Annual Budget

74%
OF SCHOOLS

Reported that the Full Board Receives
Financial Reports at Least Quarterly

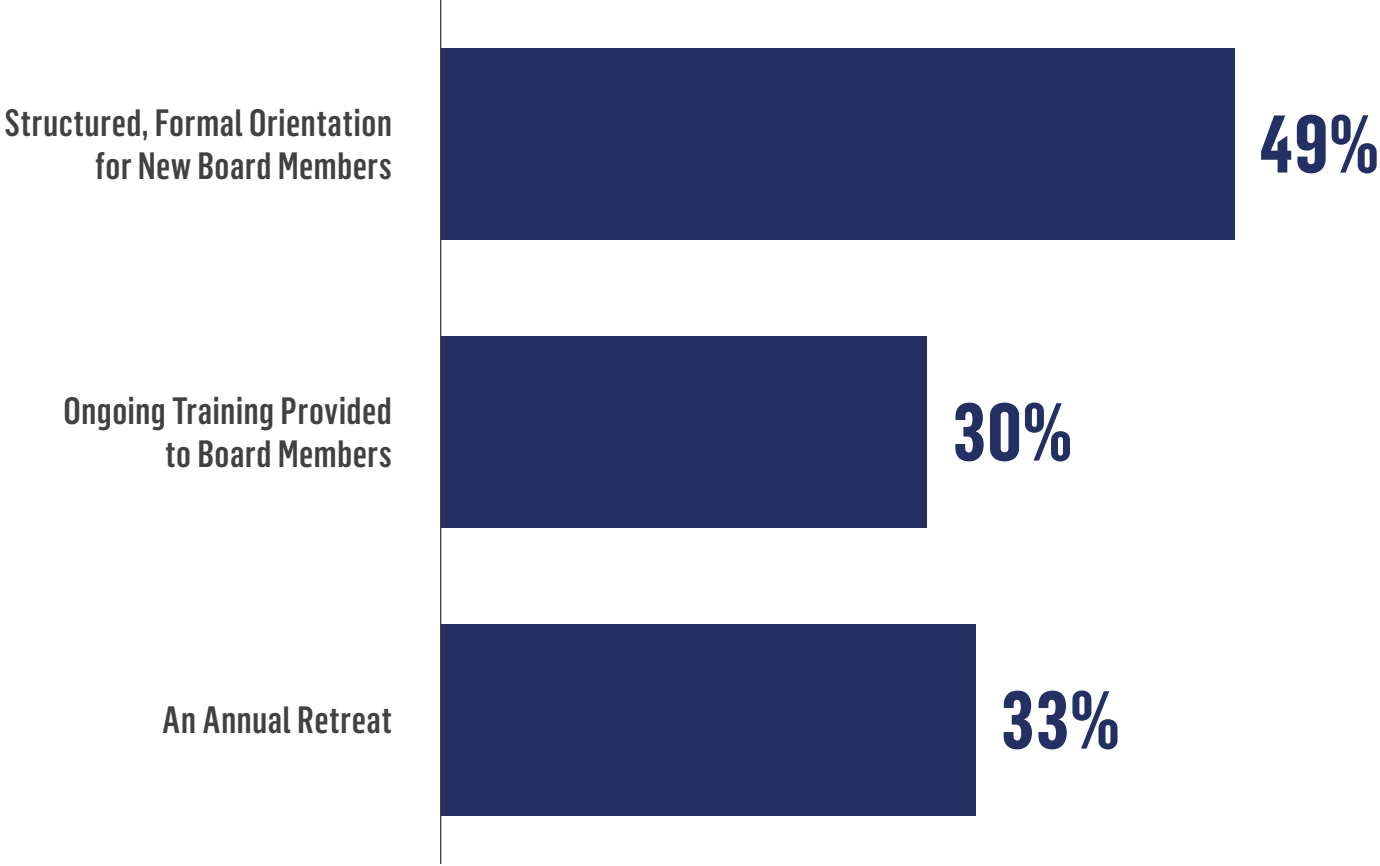
86%
OF SCHOOLS

Reported Having a Formal
Independent Audit

95%
OF SCHOOLS

Reported that the Organization Carried
Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES



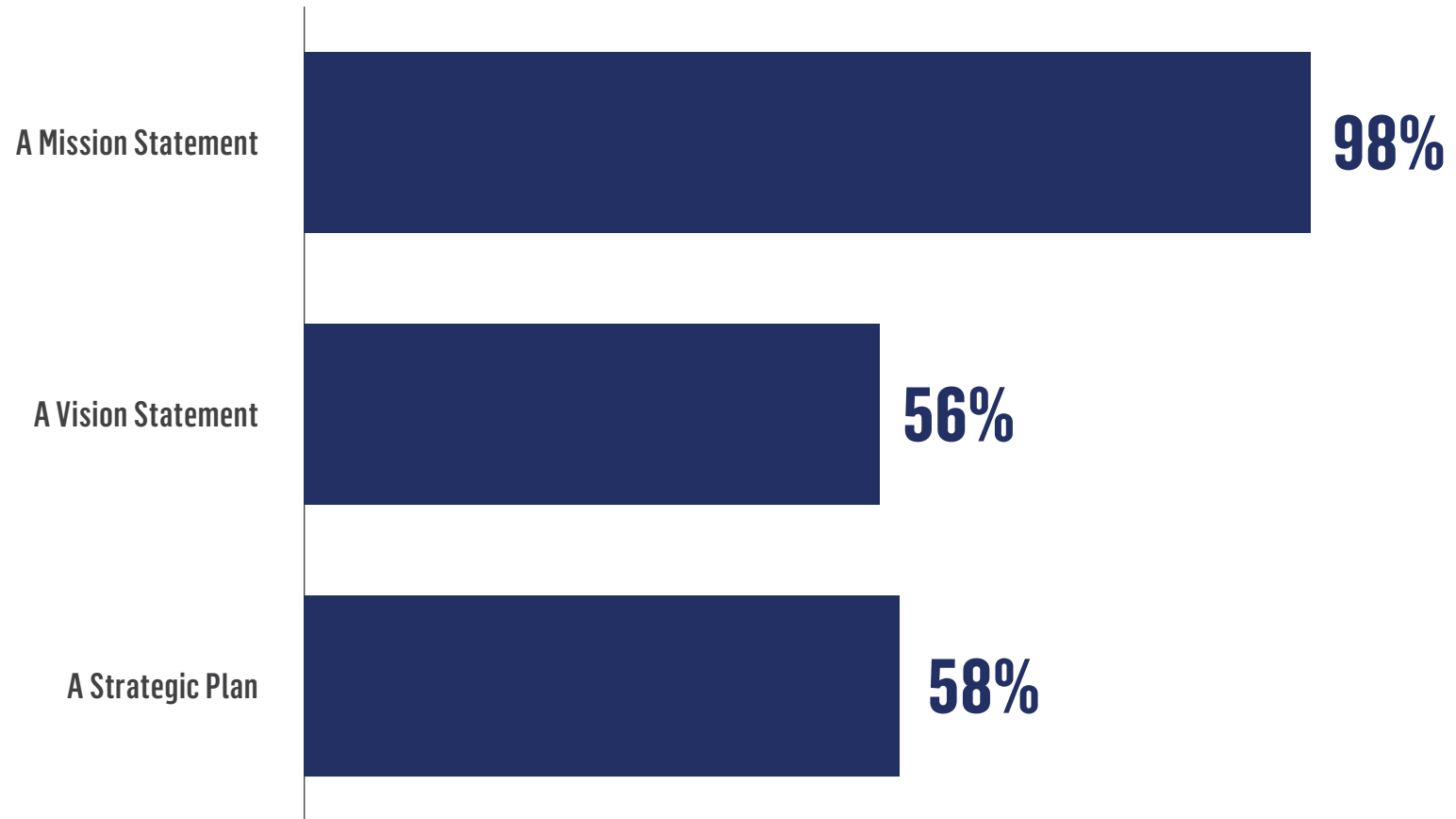
BOARD BY-LAW COMPONENTS



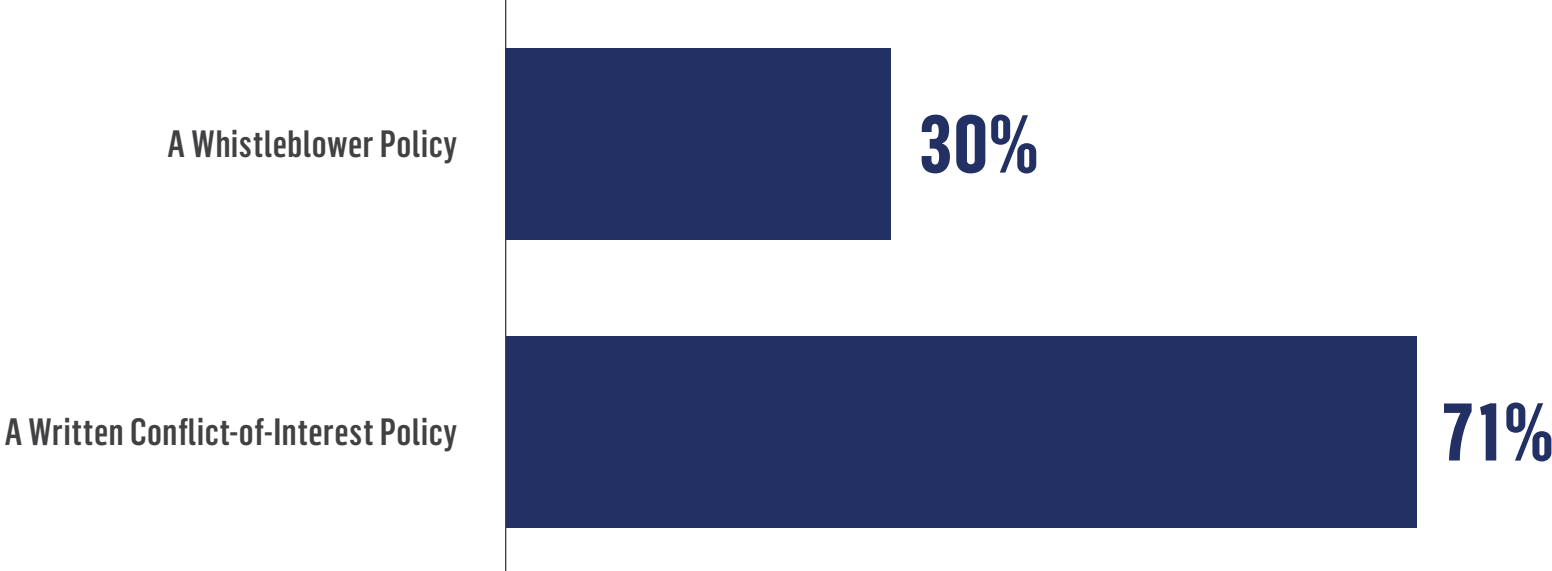
BOARD EFFECTIVENESS



FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES

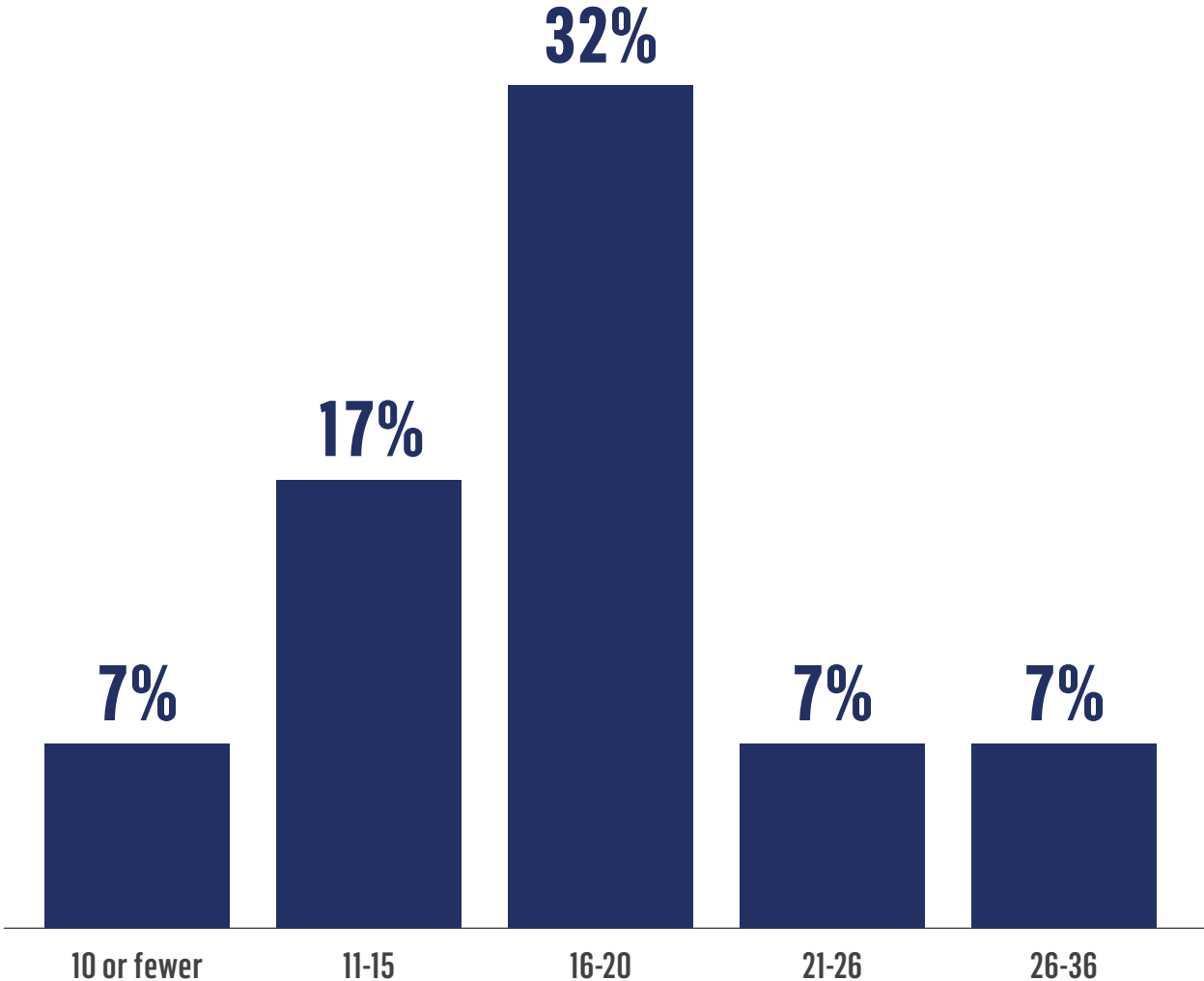


POLICIES



BOARD INFORMATION

Number of Voting Board Members



BOARD MEETINGS

Number of Hours for a Typical Board Meeting	Percent of Schools
<2 hours	15%
2 hours	51%
>2 hours	34%

Number of Times Full Board Meets in a Year	Percent of Schools
4 - 7 times	22.5%
8 - 10 times	62.5%
11 - 16 times	15%

Board Member Attendance at Meetings	Percent of Schools
80% or higher attendance	43%
70-75% attendance	35%
60% or less attendance	22%

If the boards of Jewish day schools were to become destinations for those who want to serve, provide oversight, ensure resources, and set strategic direction, the possibilities are endless for the schools themselves. An engaged and mission-driven board that is invested in continuous learning will serve their school well. As Cyril Houle once said, “A good board is a victory, not a gift.”

Prizmah is dedicated to creating a strategic and systematic approach to research, data collection and knowledge sharing of the collective learning and insights from the field of Jewish day schools to inform, inspire and empower each individual school and community.

Please email Ilisa Cappell, VP of Leadership Development at ilisac@prizmah.org for more information.

[Lay Leadership Executive Summary](#)

[Lay Leader Reshet](#)

[Must See Resources for Board Chairs and Board Members](#)