

ENROLLMENT TREND REPORT

Israeli Transfers to Jewish Day Schools and Yeshivas
during the War in Israel: Week of October 20–27, 2023

Amy Adler, Senior Director, Catalyzing Resources
Odelia Epstein, Director, Knowledge, Research and Data
Beth Rivkind, Director, Enrollment Growth



PRIZMAH
Center for Jewish Day Schools

OVERVIEW

After Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th, 2023, many Jewish day schools and yeshivas began sharing that they were receiving inquiries from families that included Israelis who were already located in or had traveled to North America who wanted their children in a Jewish setting at this time. This report provides a snapshot of the trend on Jewish day schools and yeshivas, with a focus on the influx of Israeli families seeking refuge in the United States and Canada.

The following is a trend report of a Pulse Survey Prizmah distributed to enrollment professionals and heads of school, representing a snapshot in time of the week of October 20-27, 2023. To ensure timely reporting to the field, the data represent the findings from the 114 schools that responded while the survey was open. The landscape is shifting each week, and while the sample is not fully representative of the field, it clearly depicts the trend of Israelis seeking enrollment in Jewish day schools in North America. Enclosed, you will find both the enrollment data and the essential support that schools urgently require at this time.

The findings of the survey shed light on the profound impact of the ongoing War in Israel on Jewish day schools and yeshivas in North America. **The influx of inquiries from Israeli students has prompted Jewish day schools and yeshivas to adapt swiftly and effectively to meet the emerging needs of the students and their families.** The collective resilience demonstrated by the schools, coupled with their collaborative efforts with local Jewish organizations, reflects a community-driven approach to providing comprehensive support for the incoming students.

In addition to absorbing costs through zero or reduced tuition, schools have identified resource gaps, including critical supplies and specialized staff requirements, highlight the pressing need for immediate collective action and support from the broader Jewish community. By addressing these challenges collaboratively, Jewish day schools and yeshivas can continue to foster inclusive and nurturing environments, ensuring the holistic wellbeing and academic success of all students during this critical period.

The landscape continues to change rapidly and may be significantly different within a few weeks time. Prizmah will continue to monitor and share findings to assess and support the needs of the field.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile of Schools (Respondents)

- Representatives from **114** schools responded to the survey.
- The findings represent **103** schools in the US and 11 schools in Canada.
- The greatest number of schools responded from the Northeast including metropolitan New York (**29** schools) and the Western regions (**18** schools).

Affiliation

Of responding schools:

- **42%** are Community/Non-denominational
- **25%** are Orthodox
- **15%** are Pluralistic
- **12%** are Conservative
- **1%** is identified here as Other, is a non-religiously affiliated Jewish school serving Jewish immigrants

KEY FINDINGS*

Israeli Student Inquiry Trends

- **94%** of schools reported receiving inquiries for enrollment.
- **92%** of schools reported receiving inquiries for enrollment of Israeli students.
- The cumulative number of inquiries of Israeli students across all the participating schools is **944** inquiries.
- Canada and the Metro NY area reported the highest average number of inquiries of Israeli students per school, **19** and **15** respectively.
- The highest number of new inquiries reported by an individual school is **110**.
- Community, Conservative, Pluralistic and Reform schools had **10** inquiries on average while Orthodox schools had **7** inquiries on average.
- **73%** percent of schools that received inquiries from Israeli students received between **1** and **10** inquiries while **21%** of schools received between **11** and **20** inquiries, and just **6%** received over **20** inquiries.

Enrollment Trends

- **80%** reported they are already enrolling the new students in their schools. One school reported they didn't have the capacity to enroll new inquiries into their early childhood due to capacities put on their license.
- **278** new students enrolled during the two-week period since the war began. Of those that have already been enrolled into schools, more than half (**62%**) are located in Canada and the Northeast, heavily represented in the Metro NY area. Eighty percent of those already enrolled are enrolled in Community, Conservative, Pluralistic and Reform schools.
- Subsequent to the survey closing, schools report continuing inquiries and larger numbers enrolling. These figures continue to grow.
- **29%** of schools reported receiving inquiries from public (**18%**) or independent school students (**11%**).

Tuition Decisions

- **52%**** of schools are not charging new Israeli students tuition at this time, and others are charging reduced tuition.

Existing Organizational Support

- **48%** of schools reported they are working with or collaborating with other local Jewish organizations that are supporting their school to aid in enrollment of Israeli or new transfer students.

Additional Support Needed

- **33%** of schools are in need of supplies such as general school supplies, desks, workbooks and textbooks, software licenses, computers, prayer and Judaic studies books, and uniforms. Providing lunch was another widely cited support needed for the new students.
- **28%** reported they need mental health professionals to support the critical emotional needs of the new students.
- **23%** reported needing staff who specialize in English language learning.

Supporting New Families

Schools reported a range of activities involved in helping support these new students, including:

Adjusting to a new school

- Bringing in volunteers to help students adjust
- Ensuring Hebrew speakers are around
- Matching families with welcome buddies
- Connecting families to other Israelis in the community

Modified admission criteria

- Waiving the application fee
- Modifying the usual admission process
- Speeding up the usual admission process

Jewish practice

- Organized Shabbat dinner, Shabbat meals and Shabbat playdates
- Delivering fresh challahs on Friday to new families

Other parenting support

- Helping with baby and toddler supplies
- Recommending pediatricians

**These data points should be seen as a floor and not a ceiling as we know schools have received more inquiries since sharing their data.*

***Some schools reported they will reassess in a month or two. Other schools reported they are working with funders/ philanthropists to pay for the tuition.*