

Heads of Orthodox Schools Salary and Benefits Report

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PRIZMAH

Center for Jewish Day Schools



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Introduction

Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools is the network for Jewish day schools and yeshivas across North America, helping schools grow their reach and impact. We are building networks for schools and their supporters to connect, learn, and become stronger—deepening talent by investing in professional and lay leaders, catalyzing resources to generate funding for schools to flourish, and accelerating educational innovation to foster teaching and learning opportunities that allow our students to thrive.

To strengthen Jewish day schools and yeshivas, Prizmah is committed to providing fieldwide data and trends. Creating a strategic and systematic approach to research, data collection, and knowledge sharing is one of Prizmah's strategic priorities. We work to collect learning and insights from the field of Jewish day schools and yeshivas in order to inform, inspire, and empower each individual and community.

Compensation is a contributing factor to job satisfaction and tenure. This is true about heads of school, and research has shown that head of school tenure affects student outcomes.¹ Because minimal access and transparency exists in this area, heads of school and boards often do not have access to data or knowledge about fieldwide trends in salary and benefits in order to inform contract negotiations. Access to compensation data can lead to greater systemic equity and parity, enabling leaders to feel more valued. In addition to helping current school leaders and board members, salary and benefits visibility can be used to help encourage rising leaders to aspire toward the headship role.

The last study of compensation and benefits of Community day schools was published in 2015; compensation and benefits for heads of Orthodox schools have never before been systematically collected and reported.² In response to requests from school leaders and boards for comparative salary data, we conducted this study to understand compensation packages of heads of Orthodox schools.

In this report, we compare the results of the study of Orthodox heads with data collected in Data Analysis for School leadership, commonly referred to as DASL, a benchmarking tool developed by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Independent school comparisons in this report are sourced from DASL. Prizmah facilitates a Jewish day school benchmarking cohort in DASL that includes head of school salary data from 49 Community, Conservative, and Reform schools. The Community, Conservative, and Reform school comparisons in this report are based on DASL data, as well.

¹ Michelle C. Partlow, "Contextual Factors Related to Elementary Principal Turnover," *Planning and Changing* 38, no. 1-2, 2007, 60-76.

Erica Harbatkin and Gary T. Henry, "[The Cascading Effects of Principal Turnover on Students and Schools.](#)" Blog post, Brookings Institute, March 9, 2022.

Karen Seashore Louis, et al, "[Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning.](#)" Wallace Foundation, July 2010.

² "[2015 Heads of Jewish Community Day Schools: A Portrait of the Field.](#)" RAVSAK, October 2015.

Executive Summary

The field of Jewish day schools and yeshivas is facing critical challenges related to the pipeline of teachers and school leaders. Transparency around compensation and benefits trends can be leveraged to help attract new talent, retain current talent, and increase equity across the field. This report is a summary of findings from a salary and benefits survey administered to heads of Orthodox schools about their 2022-2023 salary and benefits.

The survey was sent to 136 heads of Orthodox schools in the United States and Canada. Sixty-eight heads of school completed the survey, for a 50% response rate. The survey respondents closely match the gender and regional distribution of all heads of school who were invited to take the survey. In addition, the respondents serve schools with diverse student enrollment sizes, operating budgets, and combinations of single gender and co-ed classes. For these reasons, we are confident the survey respondents reasonably represent heads of Centrist and Modern Orthodox schools in the United States.³

PROFILE OF CURRENT HEADS

Nearly 60% of heads of Orthodox schools are between the ages of 45 and 59. Two-thirds are men (67%) and one-third are women.⁴ By way of comparison, for heads of Community, Conservative, and Reform Jewish day schools, that trend is reversed, with 54% women and 46% men. Most Orthodox male heads of school have rabbinical ordination; most Orthodox female heads have a master's degree or higher. The vast majority of Orthodox heads (84%) have a written contract, with contract terms usually between three and five years.

Median tenure for heads of Orthodox schools in 2022-2023 is five years, and the average tenure is 6.5 years.⁵ Other Jewish day schools (Community, Conservative, and Reform schools as a group) have the same median tenure of five years and an average tenure of 7.5 years. In comparison, independent school heads also have a five-year median tenure and a slightly longer average tenure of 7.7 years. Sixty-four percent of heads of Orthodox schools have been heads at their *current* schools for five years or fewer, and 75% have been in the role of headship across all schools in which they have worked for over five years.

³ As stated in the report below, two Canadian schools participated in the study. Although their overall percentage of respondents aligns to the percent of schools in our network, we cannot state that this data is fully reflective of Orthodox schools in Canada.

⁴ Our dataset includes six respondents from three schools where two people share the responsibility of the headship at their school.

⁵ Both averages and medians are often reported with salary data because averages can be skewed by outlier data. Median describes the midpoint in the dataset, where half the respondents are below that number and half of the respondents are above, and is a valid descriptor for salary.

SALARY

The study found that gender, school size, and location each play a key role in head of school salary. Median base salary for heads of Orthodox schools is \$216,000, and average salary is \$237,800. Consistent with other compensation data, the average base salary varies by region, with the highest in the Metro New York area, followed by the West and the South. The base salary of the head of school is strongly correlated with the school's enrollment. In schools with under 150 students, the average base salary is \$169,200. In schools with 151-300 students, the average salary increases to \$228,685, and it further rises to \$276,500 in larger schools with an enrollment ranging from 501 to 700 students. Schools with enrollment over 700 have the highest average salary, at \$396,225.

As tenure in the head of school position at the same school increases, so does base salary. On average, those with fewer than four years in their current role have a base salary of \$219,000, while those with 10 or more years in the same role have a higher base salary of \$282,000. This indicates that the longer a head of school stays in their position at a particular school, the higher their salary tends to be. Building and sustaining a long-term relationship with a school appears to have substantially greater impact on salary growth over time compared to switching schools laterally.

For female heads, the median salary is \$200,000, whereas for male heads, it is \$257,000. Overall women tend to lead schools with smaller enrollments and budgets. By conducting a regression analysis that takes into account enrollment and budget size, it was discovered that gender is the most powerful predictor of head of school salary.⁶ Female heads were found to earn \$56,000 – \$61,000 less than their male counterparts with similar school profiles. Based on this regression model, if a male and female head were running two schools with the same budget, enrollment, grade levels, and tenure at current school, the male head would earn \$56,000 – \$61,000 more than the female head.

In other Jewish day schools and in independent schools, a similar gap exists between men's and women's compensation. The gap between the median base salary in Community, Conservative, and Reform schools as a group and independent schools is between \$57,000 and \$63,000, which is in the same range as Orthodox schools.⁷

Using a different and standardized metric of the gender gap in salaries, the survey data show female heads of Orthodox schools earn 78 cents for every dollar a male head earns. For independent schools, that gender pay gap is 79 cents per dollar, and for other Jewish day schools, the difference is 82 cents per dollar.⁸ When looking at median salaries and the gender pay gap, Orthodox schools appear to be in line with comparable schools and larger societal trends.

⁶ Head of school age, head of school current tenure in current position, school budget size, school enrollment, and grades the school serve were controlled for when calculating the \$56,000 – \$61,000 difference in pay through regression modeling.

⁷ DASL 2022-2023.

⁸ *ibid.*

Bonuses are another component of meaningful compensation. One in four heads of Orthodox schools reported receiving a bonus last year. The median bonus was \$10,000. While the overall proportion of male and female leaders who received bonuses was similar, the lowest reported bonus by a male head of school was \$4,500 higher than by a female head of school.

Respondents were asked if they had negotiated their compensation package in their most recent hiring or contract renewal. Eighty-four percent of heads negotiated their salary and benefits. Those who negotiated their salaries had higher salaries than those who did not. Nonetheless, those who did not negotiate reported being happy with the compensation they were offered.

BENEFITS

Non-monetary benefits are another important aspect of the overall compensation package employees receive. The majority of schools, 91%, offer a retirement plan or pension. Three out of four heads of school receive contributions to that plan from the school. Medical insurance is offered by 86% of schools. Female heads were found to be less likely to work at schools that offer medical insurance than male heads.

Nearly all male heads of school claim parsonage, a federally designated housing allowance available to clergy that allows them to exclude housing costs from gross income for income tax purposes. In contrast, only 40% of female heads claim parsonage.⁹ Overall, women were less likely to receive any housing benefit from the school.

Professional development budgets designated for the head of school's own use are a way for school boards to support their leaders and provide an additional benefit. Six out of 10 heads reported receiving a professional development budget for their own use. Heads of school under 45 years old are the most likely age group to receive a personal professional development budget. Newer heads, those with under four years of tenure, are more likely to have their own professional development budget than those with more years of experience.

⁹ Heads were not asked about their marital status or whether a spouse designates parsonage through their employment.

Methodology

To gather this data, Prizmah fielded a survey from August 2022 to December 2022 to 136 heads of Orthodox schools within its network in the United States and Canada. The invitation was sent via email, and the survey was administered online. The survey garnered a 50% response rate, with a final sample size of 68 respondents.

This study used the National Association of Independent Schools' definition for the role of head of school as the criteria to participate: the person who "has the overall responsibility for the school and its mission, overseeing all internal operations and, in most cases, all external operations as well."

Jewish day schools and yeshivas often have organizational structures and titles that differ from the standards of most independent schools. In some Orthodox schools, the professional who fills the head of school role holds the title principal, menahel/es, executive director, or similar titles. As such, the survey was shared with all professionals in a head of school role, not only those with the title head of school. In addition, there were four respondents who do not report directly to the board. One in four respondents reported that they share their head of school responsibilities with another professional on their team.

The data collected in this survey refer to the 2022-23 school year unless otherwise indicated. The data is reported in a way to protect the personal identity of respondents and schools.

About the Sample

As noted, the survey was sent to 136 potential respondents, which yielded a total response rate of 50%. The distribution of gender and the regional location of schools is very similar among survey respondents and the total target population—that is, all heads who received the survey. In addition, the sample of survey respondents represents a diverse set of schools by enrollment size, budgets, and the gender of students. Together, these two factors allay concerns that the achieved sample is biased in some way. Lastly, it is important to note that within the Prizmah network, Orthodox schools tend to lean toward Centrist and Modern Orthodox. As a result, there are few Yeshiva Orthodox schools in the study. Hasidic schools are outside of the scope of this research.

Exhibit 1 below illustrates the response rate by region and of the total survey respondents. As can be seen, response rates varied little by region, except Canada. The Northeast has the greatest number of Orthodox schools and therefore represent 47% of the total respondents. Within the Northeast, 26 schools were located in the Metro New York area, which includes New York City, Long Island, Westchester, Southern Connecticut, and the New Jersey counties of Bergen, Essex, and Union. Because just two heads of Canadian schools participated in the study, we cannot be confident that this data is fully reflective of Orthodox schools in Canada.

Exhibit 1. Respondents by Region

Regions	Response Rate	% of Overall Respondents
Canada	29%	3%
Mid-Atlantic	64%	10%
Midwest	53%	12%
Northeast	46%	47%
Southern	56%	13%
Western	56%	15%
Total	50%	100%

n=136

The survey was sent to 45 women and 91 men, with a 56% completion rate by women and 47% completion rate by men (Exhibit 2). As the majority of heads of Orthodox schools, men were 67% of the target population of those who received the survey and 63% of the actual respondents; women comprised 33% of the target population and 37% of the respondents.

Exhibit 2. Respondents by Gender

Category	Response Rate	% of Overall Respondents
Female	56%	37%
Male	47%	63%
Total	50%	100%

Respondents reflect a broad diversity of schools by enrollment size, from small schools to large, and by operating budgets, from under \$1 million to over \$40 million; and by genders served, including single gender and co-ed with mixed gender and separate gender classes (see Exhibits 3, 4, and 5).

Exhibit 3. School Size of Respondent Schools

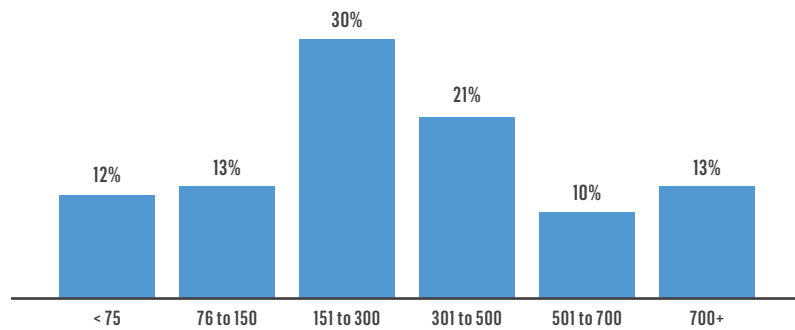


Exhibit 4. Operating Budget of Respondent Schools

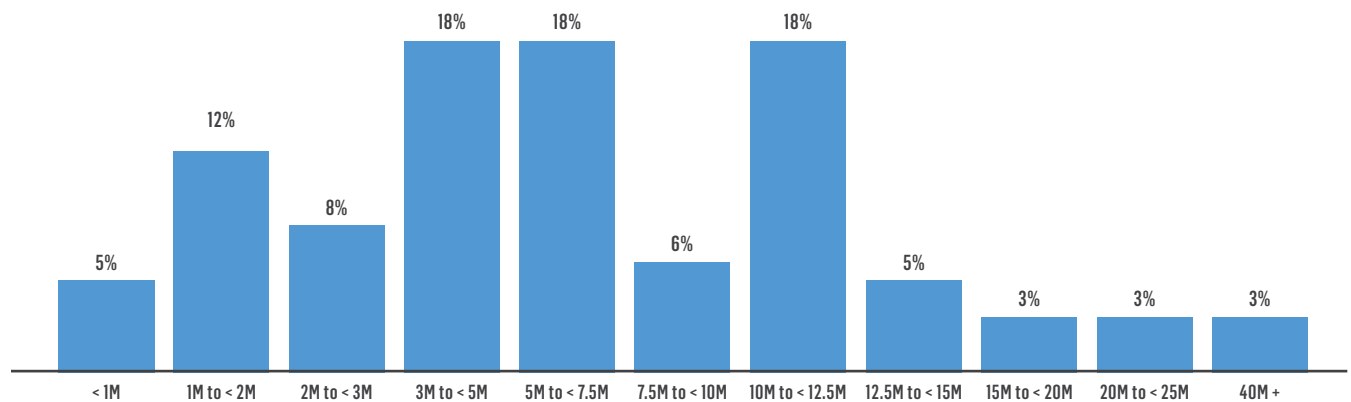
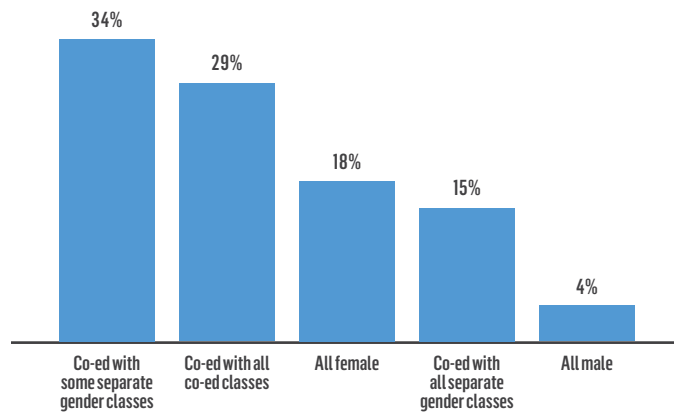
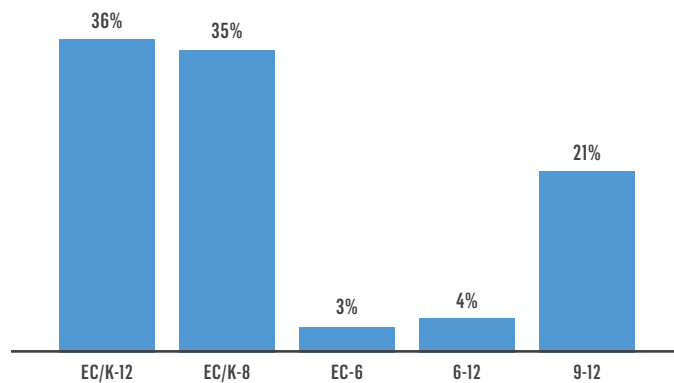


Exhibit 5. Co-ed and Single Gender School Representation of Respondent Schools
 Students on Campus Are...



Respondents also represent schools with different grades served (Exhibit 6). Some schools serve early childhood / kindergarten through 12th grade (EC/K-12), and others early childhood / kindergarten through 8th grade (EC/K-8). Some are standalone high schools (9-12), and others are elementary schools and middle schools (EC-6 and 6-8).

Exhibit 6. Grade Levels of Respondent Schools



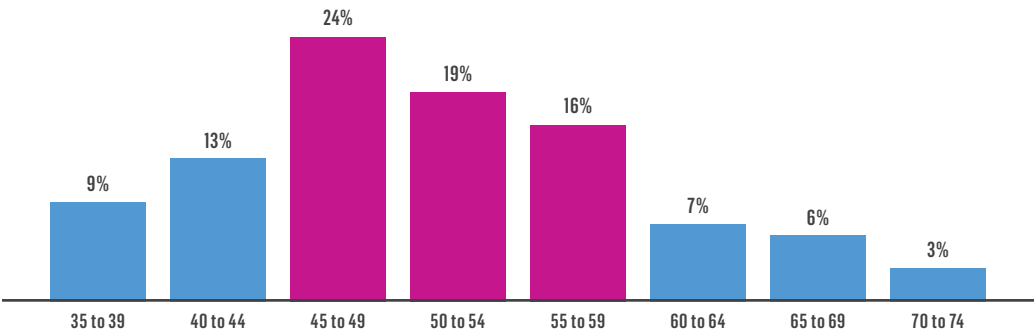
Profiles of Heads of Schools

A series of questions about respondents' demographic, educational, and professional experiences provide a profile of current heads of schools.

AGE

The youngest heads of school are 35-39 years old, and the most senior are 70-74 (Exhibit 7). The largest age groups are 45-49 (24%), 50-54 (19%), and 55-59 (16%)—with nearly 60% between the ages of 45 and 59. Sixteen percent of heads are over the age of 60, and 9% are under 39.

Exhibit 7. Age of Respondents



GENDER

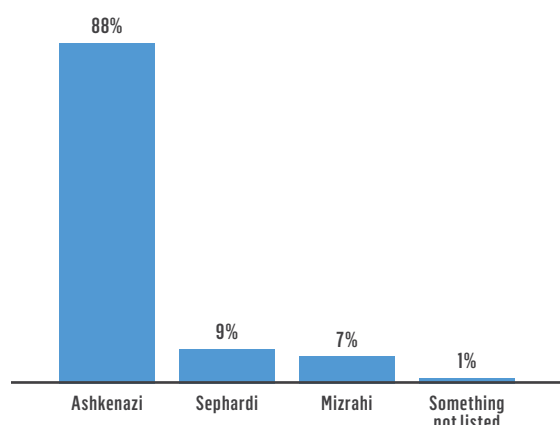
As noted, 63% of respondents are men and 37% are women. This includes co-ed and single gender schools. Comparatively, at last count, Community, Conservative, and Reform Jewish day schools have 46% male and 54% female heads of school, and independent schools in North America have 55% male and 45% female heads of school.¹⁰

ETHNICITY

The majority of heads, 88%, identify as Ashkenazi (Exhibit 8). Respondents were asked to select all that apply, and some chose more than one category. Sixteen percent of respondents identify as Sephardi and/or Mizrahi.

¹⁰ Data from 1,103 NAIS member schools as reported in DASL 2022-2023.

Exhibit 8. Ethnicity of Respondents



DEGREES

Ninety-five percent of men and 92% of women serving as heads of Orthodox schools hold advanced degrees (Exhibit 9). Almost all male heads of school, 95%, have rabbinic ordination, while approximately 20% of men also hold an advanced degree in education or a related field. Ninety-two percent of women hold advanced doctoral or master’s degrees in education or related fields. Not shown below, 62% of men have rabbinical ordination and a master’s degree.

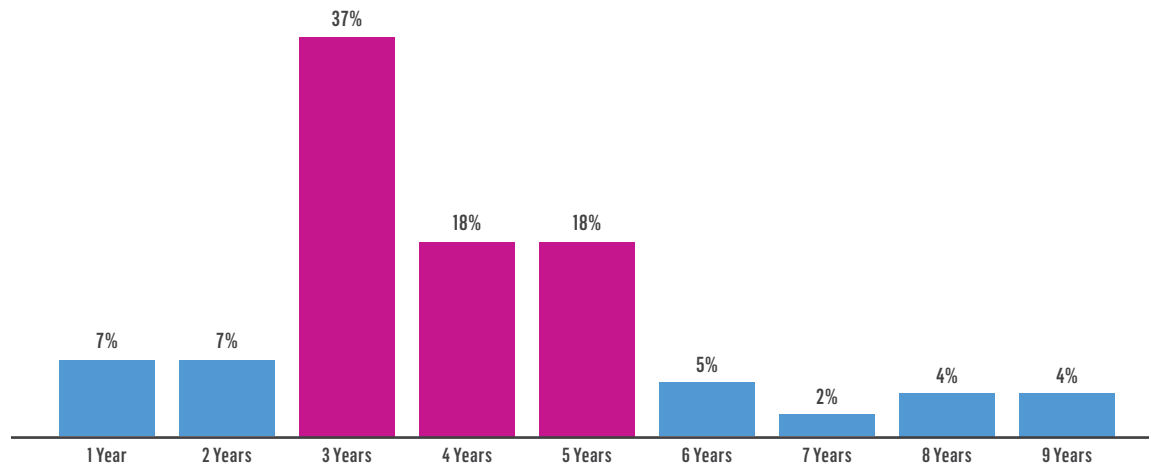
Exhibit 9. Highest Educational Level of Respondents

Highest Level of Education	Men	Women
Rabbinic ordination, no doctorate/professional degree	76%	0%
Rabbinic ordination plus doctorate/professional degree	19%	0%
Doctorate/professional (no rabbinic ordination)	2%	32%
Master’s degree	2%	60%
Bachelor’s degree	0%	8%
Total	100%	100%

CONTRACT

Eighty-four percent of respondents reported they have a written employment contract, and 6% say they do not have a contract but they do have a different type of agreement, such as a memo of understanding. The remaining 10% reported they do not have a contract or other type of agreement. The variation in length of contract is striking, from one year to 10-plus (Exhibit 10). A three-year contract was the most commonly reported contract term, with four- and five-year contracts tied for second. Seventy-three percent of heads have a contract term that is between three and five years.

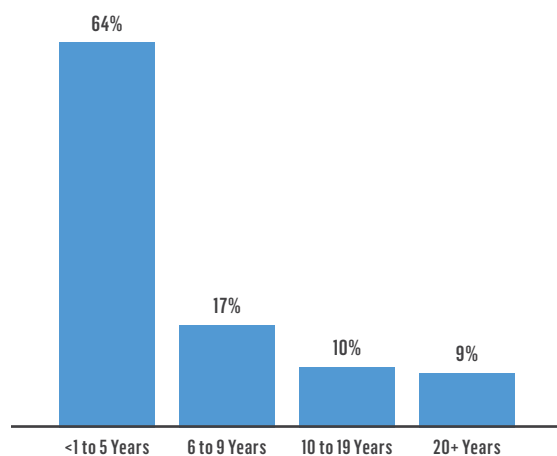
Exhibit 10. Length of Contract



TENURE

Tenure for heads of Orthodox schools is roughly equivalent to their peers in Jewish and independent schools. The majority of Orthodox heads, 64%, have served at their current schools for five years or fewer, while 19% have held their position for 10 years or longer (Exhibit 11). Their median tenure in their current school is five years, and the average tenure is 6.5 years. According to data collected in Data and Analysis for School Leadership (DASL) about the 2022-2023 school year, other Jewish schools follow the same trend, with a median tenure of five years and an average tenure of 7.5 years. Heads at independent schools have an average tenure of 7.7 years for the 2022-2023 school year.¹¹

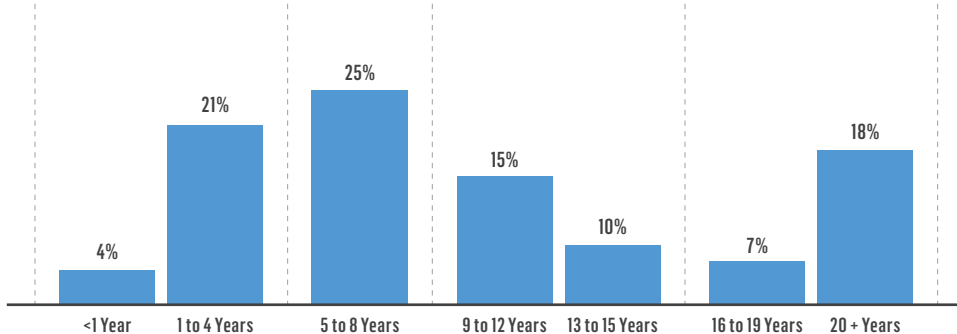
Exhibit 11. Total Tenure as a Head at Current School



¹¹ DASL 2022-2023.

Respondents were asked how many years they have served as heads across all the schools in which they have worked. One in four heads of school have been the lead professional at a school for under four years, and another quarter between five and eight years (Exhibit 12). The third quarter have nine to 15 years of experience, and the remaining 25% have over 15 years of experience as a head. In other words, 75% of heads in Orthodox schools have significant experience in the role.

Exhibit 12. Total Tenure as a Head of School



Many heads of school have spent decades working in the field of Jewish education. Seventy-two percent of respondents have been in education for over 20 years. Thirty-five percent (23 respondents) were employed at their current school before being hired as the lead professional. Of those, 46% were employed by their current school for five years and under, and 45% were employed by their current school between 10 and 23 years. Eight out of 23 were classroom teachers, and 14 out of 23 were principals or assistant principals.

Female heads were more likely than male heads to have been employed at the school in a different position prior to becoming the lead professional. Forty-eight percent of female heads were promoted to the headship from within the school compared to 28% of male heads.

TEACHING TIME

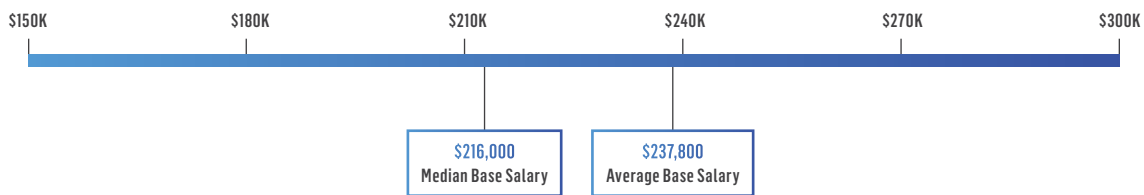
Sixty percent of respondents reported teaching at least one semester-long class in addition to their head role. Of those, the average percent of time spent teaching was 12%.

Compensation

The next section focuses on base salary, salary increases, and bonuses. Base salary is the fixed amount that an employer agrees to pay an employee in exchange for time and services. It does not include other monetary benefits. Base salary is analyzed by region, enrollment size, education, tenure, and gender.

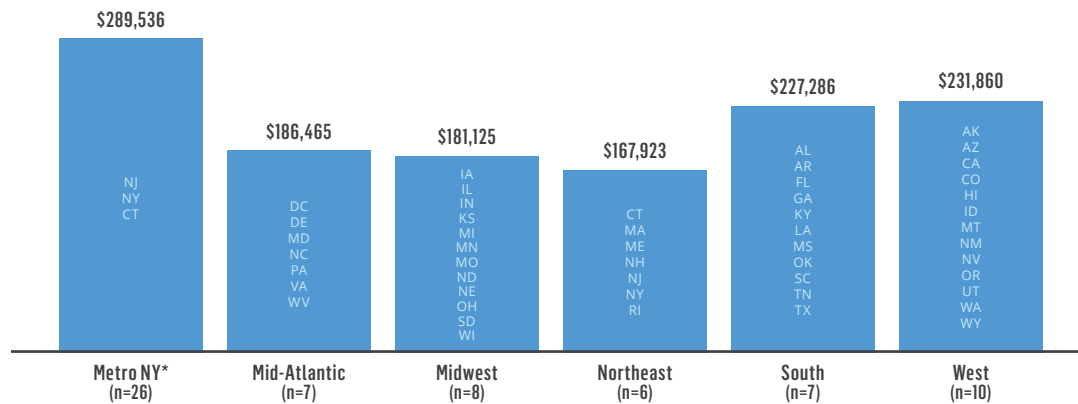
BASE SALARY

The average base salary for an Orthodox head of school is \$237,800, with a median of \$216,000.¹²



Average base salary varies regionally, with the largest average salaries in the Metro New York area, South and West (Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13. Base Salary by U.S. Region



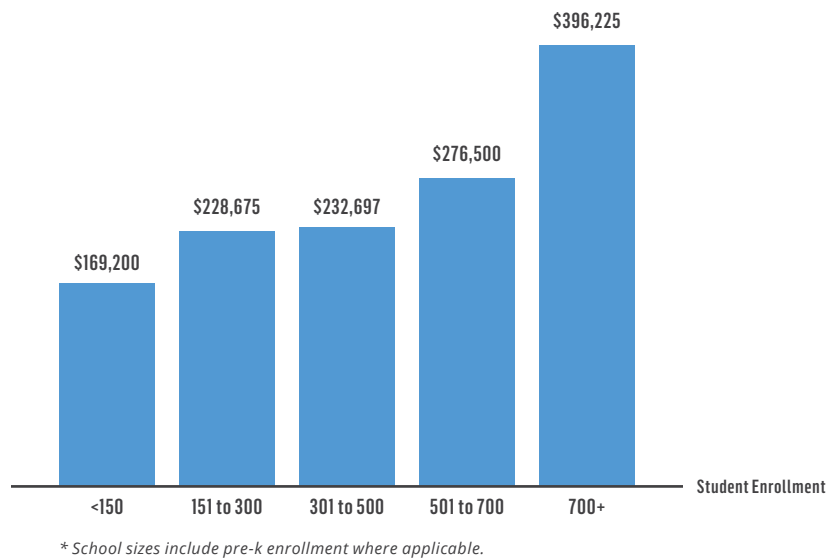
Note: Canada is not shown here due to the low number of respondents.

* Metro NY = New York City, Long Island, Westchester, Southern CT, NJ Counties of Bergen, Essex and Union. These schools are not included in the Northeast region.

Salary is highly correlated with school enrollment size, with significant leaps in salary levels after 150, 500, and 700 students. It is the second strongest predictor for salary (Exhibit 14). The strongest predictor, gender, will be discussed below.

¹² As stated earlier, both averages and medians are often reported with salary data because averages can be skewed by outlier data. Median describes the midpoint in the dataset, where half the respondents are below and half are above.

Exhibit 14. Average Base Salary by School Size

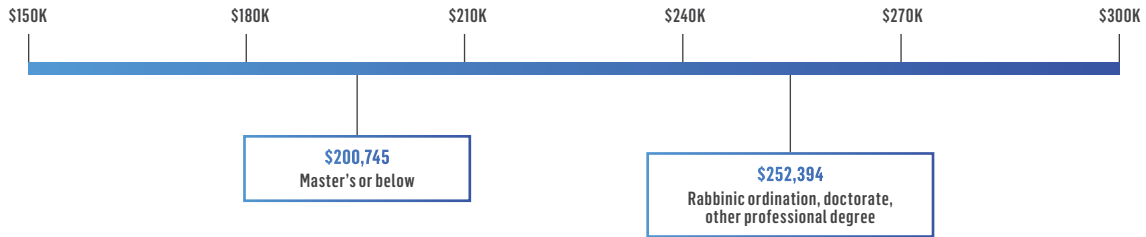


Another way to view salary data is by percentiles. The percentiles in Exhibit 15 demonstrate the range of salaries by enrollment size from small schools to large schools and what percentage falls within that range. Percentiles allow employees and potential employees to understand where their salary is in the spectrum and is often used to negotiate toward higher percentiles. Employers use this data to assess the right compensation for their employees.

Exhibit 15. Salary Percentiles by Enrollment Size

	150 and under	151 to 300	301 to 500	501 to 700	700+
25th percentile	\$109,000	\$191,500	\$205,000	\$241,250	\$302,000
50th percentile	\$160,000	\$218,500	\$212,000	\$272,000	\$400,000
75th percentile	\$185,000	\$253,750	\$293,750	\$299,750	\$424,027
90th percentile	\$206,000	\$289,700	\$300,000	\$355,000	\$584,000
Number of Schools	17	20	14	6	9

EDUCATION

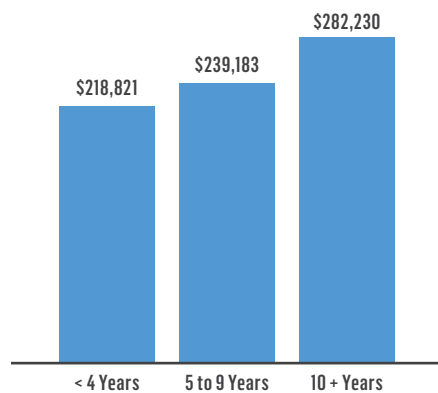


Higher levels of educational attainment lead to higher average base salaries. People holding rabbinic ordination, a doctoral degree, or other professional degree earn more than those with a master's degree or less.

TENURE

As tenure in current position at the same school increases, so does base salary. Salary is associated with the number of years heads of schools have been at their *current* school, rising from an average of \$219,000 for those with four years or less in their current job to \$282,000 among those with 10 or more years in their current role. There is only limited evidence that previous experience as a head of school affects current salary. Moreover, the effect of previous experiences seems to diminish over time as heads stay in one position. Put somewhat differently, establishing and maintaining a long-term relationship with a school appears substantially more important for over-time salary growth than lateral moves from one school to another.

Exhibit 16. Base Salary by Tenure as a Head of School at Current School



GENDER

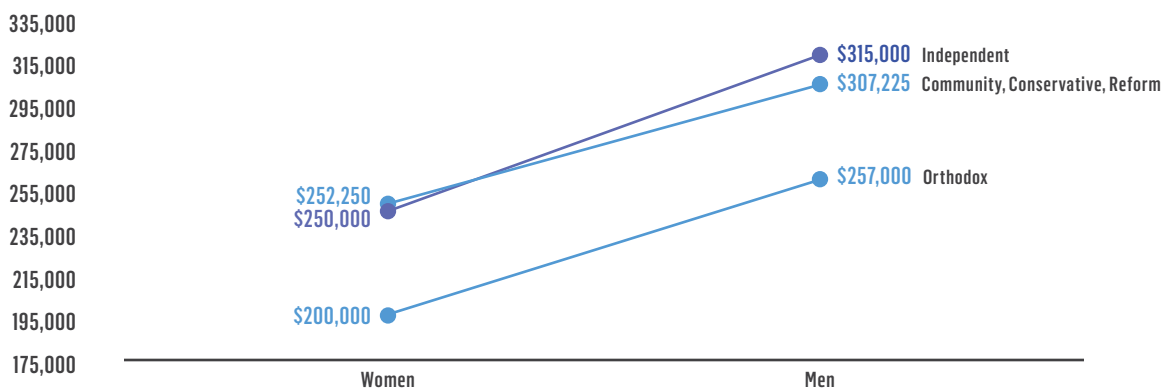
There is a significant gap in the median base salary for men and women heads of Orthodox schools: \$257,000 (men) as compared to \$200,000 (women). The difference in average base salary is larger: \$271,000 (men) compared to \$182,000 (women).

Statistical analysis known as multivariate regression shows that even after controlling for the effects of age, budget size, enrollment, tenure in current position, grades the school serves, and student enrollment on salaries, women still earn between \$56,000 and \$61,000 less than their male counterparts with similar profiles.

In fact, gender was the strongest determinant of salary among all the factors we examined.

Orthodox day schools are not distinctive in having a large salary gap between male and female heads of school. Similar gaps by gender exist in other Jewish day schools and independent schools (Exhibit 17). In other Jewish schools, the difference in median base salary between men and women is also \$57,000,¹³ albeit overall base salaries are higher than in Orthodox schools. In independent schools, outside of the Jewish day school sector, median salaries are even higher, as is the median wage gap between men and women, which is \$63,000.¹⁴

Exhibit 17. Median Head of School Base Salary



A standardized and commonly used metric for the gender pay gap indicates how many cents on the dollar women earn as compared to men. For heads of Orthodox schools, the gender pay gap is 78 cents, which is near the gap of 79 cents for independent schools.¹⁵

¹³ DASL 2022-2023.

¹⁴ Independent school data referenced here is about National Association of Independent School members who contributed to DASL about the 2022-2023 school year (n=1,032).

¹⁵ Ibid.

Other Jewish schools have a slightly smaller gap at 82 cents. Overall in the U.S., for all occupations, the gap is smaller, with women earning 84 cents for every dollar men earn.¹⁶ In sum, whether looking at median salaries or the standardized gender pay gap metric, Orthodox schools are in line with other Jewish day schools, independent schools, and larger societal trends in having higher salaries for men than women.

SALARY INCREASES AND BONUSES

Three out of four respondents received annual increases to their base salary. Of these, 63% reported increases stipulated in their contracts, 27% received cost-of-living adjustments, and 14% earned merit increases based on job performance.

Of respondents who were heads at their current school last year, one in four received a cash bonus in the previous year. The median bonus was \$10,000, the average \$12,000, and the maximum \$25,000. A quarter of male and female heads reported receiving a bonus. The lowest reported bonus by a male head of school was \$4,500 higher than the lowest reported bonus for a female head.

¹⁶ [“A Window Into the Wage Gap: What’s Behind It and How to Close It.”](#) National Women’s Law Center, January 10, 2023.

Benefits

RETIREMENT

Retirement benefits are an important aspect of compensation packages. In the United States, the standard in the public school sector is to offer defined benefit plans (traditionally referred to as pensions) and defined contribution plans.¹⁷ Defined benefit plans guarantee a certain level of benefits to employees in their retirement. Under a defined contribution plan, employees allocate a part of their paycheck to an account funding their retirement, and employers often match some part of the employees' contribution. Unlike pensions, defined contribution plans do not guarantee a certain level of benefits in retirement. In general, over time, employers have moved from offering defined benefit plans to offering defined contribution plans, because defined contribution plans create much less long-term financial liability for them.

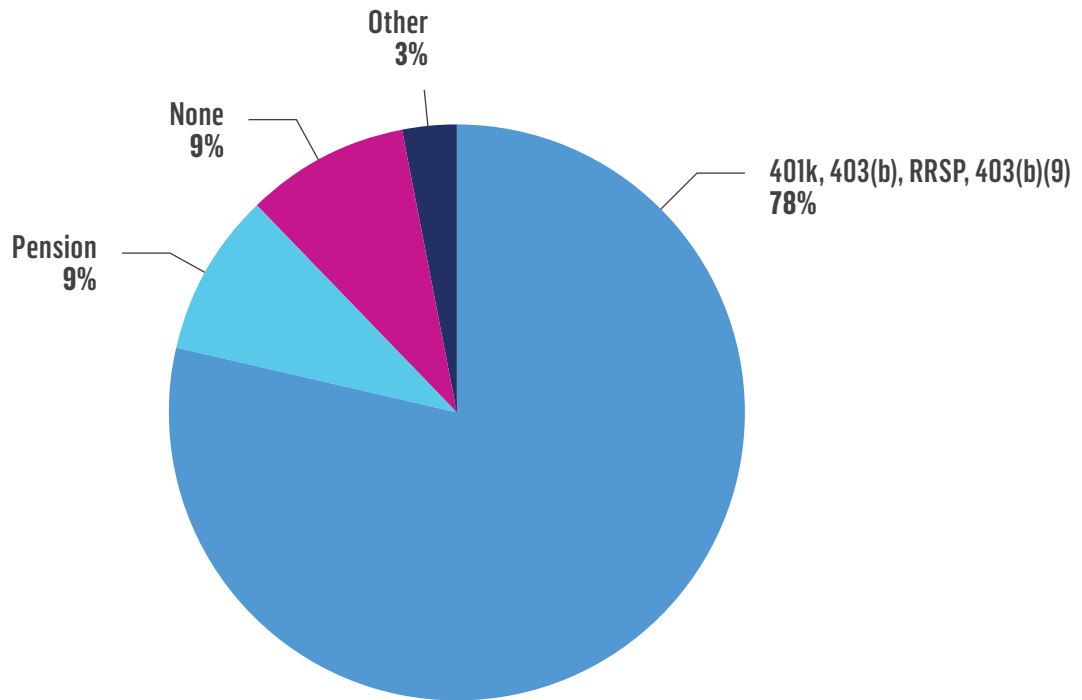
This pattern appears to fit Orthodox Jewish day schools as well. More than three-quarters (78%) of heads report that their school offers a defined contribution plan such as a 401(k), 403(b), 403(b)(9), or Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), while only 9% reported their school offers a defined benefit plan (a pension). Six respondents, 9%, reported they aren't offered any type of retirement plan (Exhibit 18).

Retirement offerings differ by school budget size, school enrollment size, and head of school gender. Schools with operating budgets above \$5 million are more likely to offer defined contribution plans than schools with operating budgets below \$5 million. As budget size is often related to enrollment size, schools with enrollment over 200 are more likely than schools with fewer than 200 students to offer these plans. Female heads are less likely to receive a defined contribution plan than male heads of school, 52% vs. 88%.¹⁸

¹⁷ Chad Aldeman, "[Teacher Pension Plans are Getting Riskier- and it Could Backfire on American Schools.](#)" Brookings Institute, March 9, 2022.

¹⁸ This finding is statistically significant at the p value < .05.

Exhibit 18. Type of Retirement Plan Offered



It is a common practice of schools and organizations to contribute to employees’ retirement accounts an amount that is equivalent to a certain percentage of employees’ salaries. Among heads of schools who receive a contribution, the majority receive the equivalent of between 1% and 6% of their base compensation (Exhibit 19). However, 25% of heads do not receive a contribution from their school. The median contribution is just under 3%.

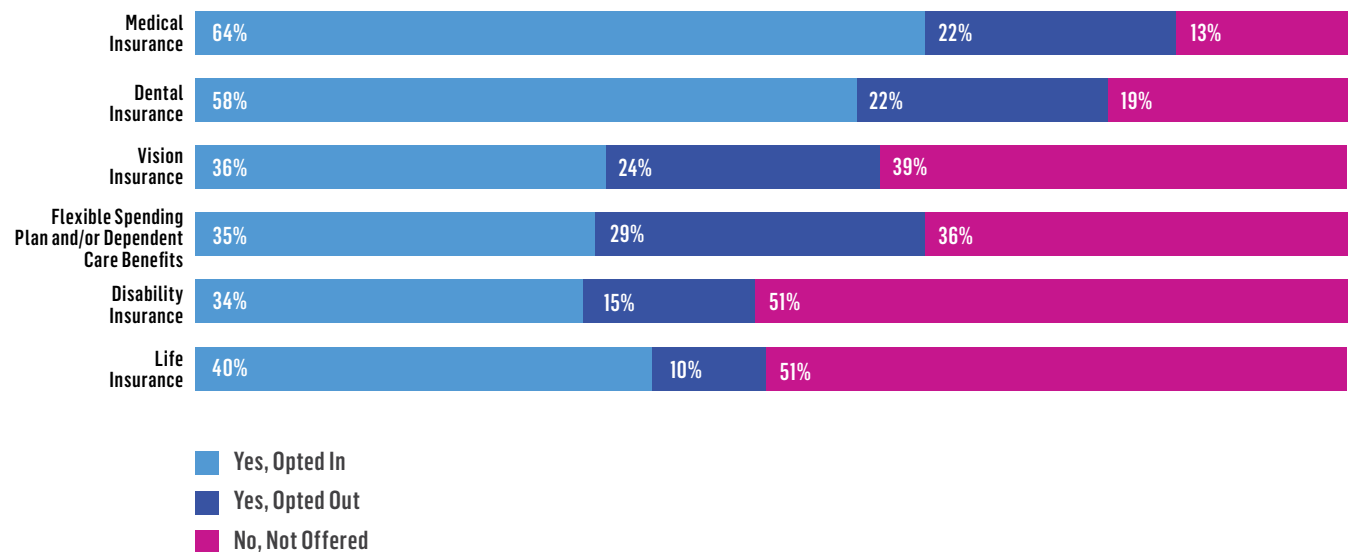
Exhibit 19. Percent of School Retirement Contribution

% of Salary School Contributes to Retirement Plan	Total % of Respondents
No contribution	25%
1-3%	31%
4-6%	31%
7-10%	12%
11%+	2%
Total	100%

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Among insurance plans, medical insurance is most commonly offered (86%), with dental insurance second (Exhibit 20). Of heads who have opted out of medical insurance, nearly all (93%) reported they are enrolled in a plan through their spouse. Vision insurance is offered at 61% of the schools. Half the schools do not offer disability and life insurance. In comparison to male heads, female heads were less likely to be offered medical insurance (64% of women were offered medical insurance compared to 100% of men) and dental insurance (68% of women compared to 88% of men).¹⁹

Exhibit 20. Insurance Coverage

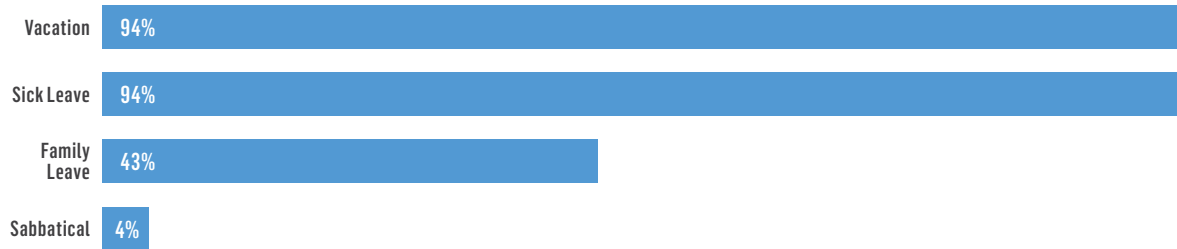


¹⁹ These differences are statistically significant at the p value < .05.

PAID TIME OFF

Paid vacation time and sick time are almost universally offered, in part due to state laws. In contrast, paid family leave, which varies from state to state, is offered to only 43% of respondents.²⁰ Just 4% receive paid sabbatical leave.

Exhibit 21. Offers Paid Time Off



HOUSING BENEFITS

Parsonage is an American federally designated housing allowance that is excludable from gross income for income tax purposes. It is often a portion of the base compensation that is pre-designated as “parsonage.” Excluding housing expenses from taxable income, whether in the form of mortgage payments or rent, can be the equivalent of an additional 10-20% of take-home pay.

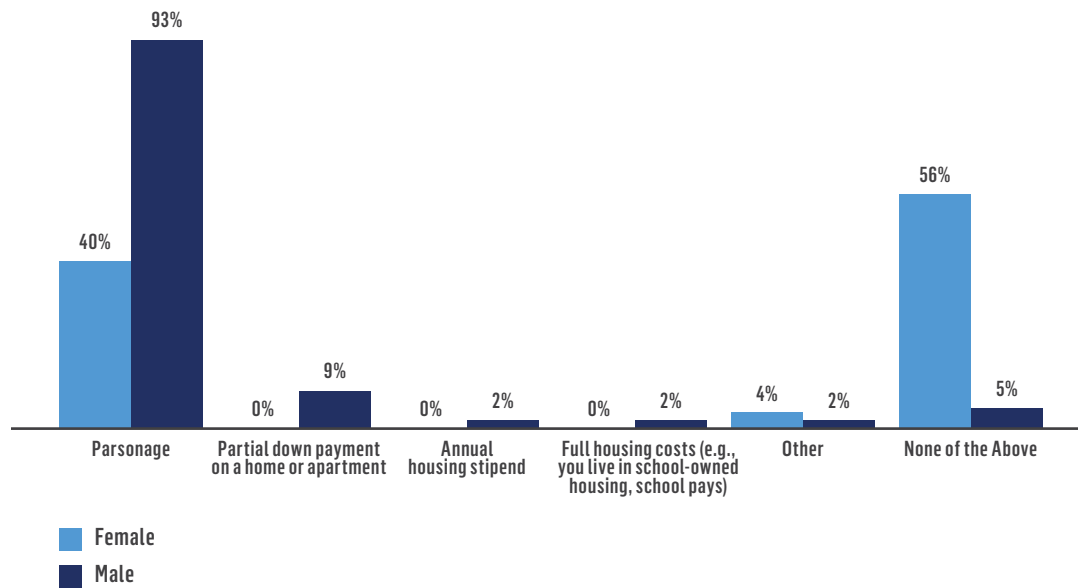
Seventy-four percent of heads reported receiving parsonage. Breaking this down by gender, 93% of male respondents and 40% of female respondents reported receiving parsonage (Exhibit 22). The percent of male respondents who reported receiving parsonage aligns with the 95% of men who reported having rabbinical ordination.²¹

²⁰ [“State Paid Family Leave Laws Across the U.S.”](#) Bipartisan Policy Center, January 20, 2023.

²¹ Dan Perla and Maccabee Avishur, [“Parsonage for Female Judaic Studies Teachers: Take 2.”](#) Blog post, AVI CHAI, August 22, 2018.

Other types of housing benefits received by heads of school include partial down payment on a home, annual housing stipend, and living in a home owned by the school. A quarter of heads reported they do not receive any housing benefit. When looking at housing benefits by gender, 56% of women reported not receiving any housing benefit, while only 5% of men reported the same.

Exhibit 22. Housing Benefits by Gender



Respondents were asked to select all that apply therefore the total is over 100%

TUITION REMISSION

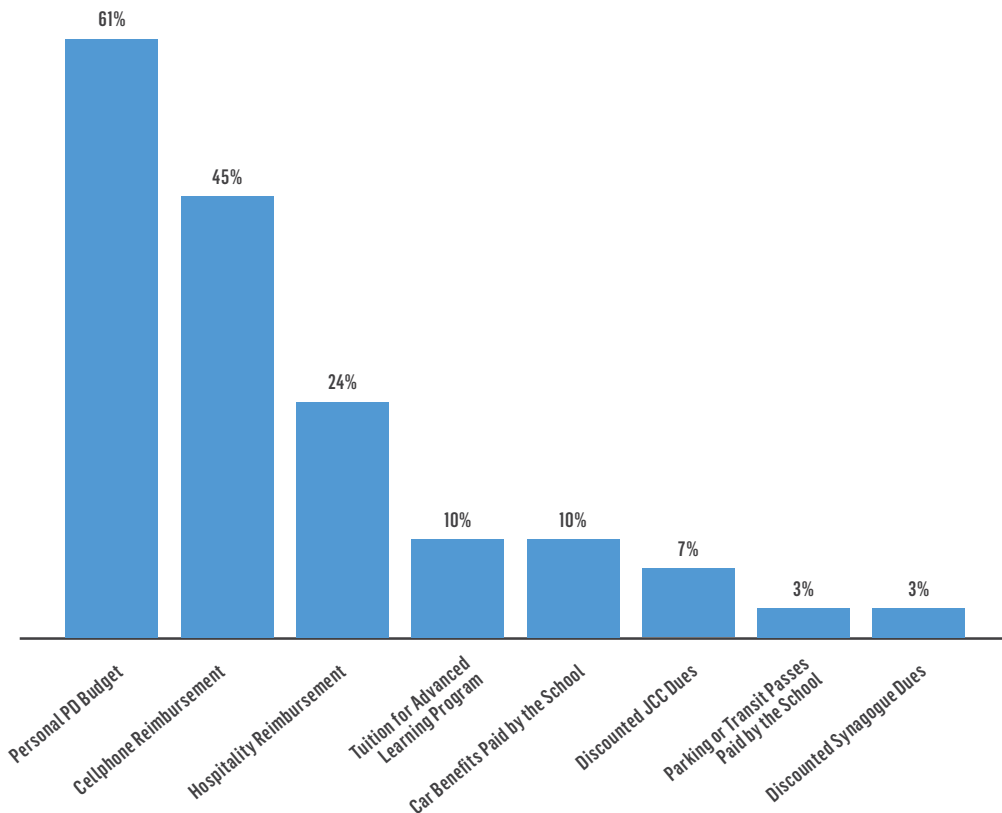
Tuition remission for children and grandchildren is often viewed as a valuable component of a head of school’s compensation package. Under half of heads reported having family members who attend the school. Of those that do, 90% receive tuition remission, with nearly all receiving full tuition remission for their children and grandchildren. For the 2022-23 school year, average tuition at Jewish day schools and yeshivas was \$23,528.²²

²² DASL 2022-2023.

OTHER BENEFITS

Respondents were asked about receiving other forms of benefits. The most common, a professional development (PD) budget for exclusive use by the head of school, was reported by 61% of the respondents (Exhibit 23). Heads under the age of 45 were most likely to have their own PD budget. Eighty-eight percent of heads under 45 have personal PD budgets, as opposed to 59% of heads ages 45-54 and 45% ages 55-74.²³ In addition, heads with four years or less of tenure as a head of school were the most likely to have a PD budget. Eighty-two percent of heads of school with less than four years of tenure as a head of school have a personal PD budget, while 69% of those with five to 12 years of experience as a head and 39% of those with 13 or more years of experience as a head have a personal PD budget.²⁴ Slightly under half receive cell phone reimbursement; very few reported discounted synagogue or JCC dues and parking/ transit passes.

Exhibit 23. Other Benefits Received



Other substantive benefits include cash payments for full cost of health insurance, stipends to pay for medical costs, coaching, life insurance, airline tickets to Israel paid for by the school's credit card miles, and hot lunch.²⁵

²³ This finding is statistically significant at the p value < .05.

²⁴ This finding is statistically significant at the p value < .05.

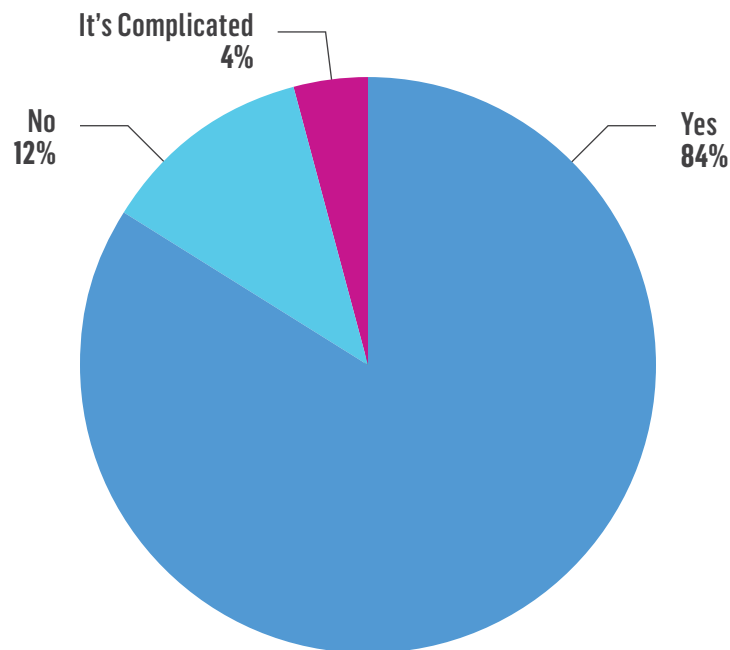
²⁵ All benefits should be approved by the board, and the school should consult with an accountant to confirm that the appropriate taxes are withheld.

NEGOTIATION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

Heads were asked whether they negotiated their compensation for their current position. The majority, 84%, did negotiate their compensation (Exhibit 24). Those who did not negotiate commented they were happy with the offer they received or that they felt the package was fair. There does not appear to be a relationship between gender and negotiations. Nevertheless, heads who did not negotiate received lower compensation than those who did.

Exhibit 24. Compensation Negotiation Practices

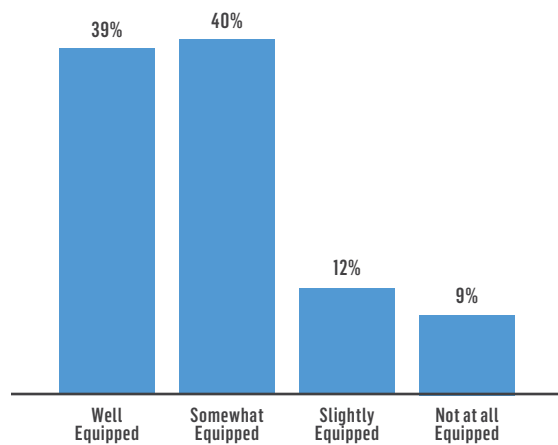
In Your Current Position, Did You Negotiate Compensation?



When asked how equipped they felt to negotiate compensation, 39% reported feeling well equipped, 40% felt somewhat equipped, 12% slightly, and 9% not at all (Exhibit 25). There was no apparent relationship between those who reported feeling equipped to negotiate and their gender.

Exhibit 25. Feeling Equipped to Negotiate

How Equipped Did You Feel to Negotiate Your Most Recent Compensation Package?



The top tools that heads reported would have helped them feel even more equipped to negotiate their compensation were comparative salary data, advice from a lawyer, and advice from a colleague (Exhibit 26).

Exhibit 26. Supports to Enhance Negotiation Skills

What Might Have Helped You To Feel More Equipped To Negotiate Your Compensation?

Comparative salary data	67%
Advice from a lawyer	30%
Advice from a colleague	22%
More/different negotiation skills	19%
Coaching	16%
Nothing	15%
Other	12%
More confidence	12%
Opportunities to practice	4%

Conclusion

Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools undertook a study of executive compensation among heads of Orthodox Jewish day schools across North America in response to the questions and needs of its network schools. Sixty-eight heads of school answered survey questions about their schools, educational backgrounds, leadership tenure, total compensation package, and attitudes toward compensation negotiation.

This comprehensive report is designed to offer valuable insights to heads of school, school boards, Jewish communal organizations, and supporters of Jewish day schools and yeshivas. Our primary objective is to provide a snapshot of heads of Orthodox schools' compensation in order to empower Jewish educational leaders and their supporters to make informed decisions. By creating greater transparency around compensation for the headship, we aim to inspire more skilled professionals to pursue this path, thereby enhancing the strength and vibrancy of Jewish educational leadership.

Among its most significant findings, this study revealed four current trends:

- The majority, 64%, of heads of school have served at their current schools for five years or fewer, and 75% of heads of school have been in the role of headship for more than five years.
- Base salary is highly related to enrollment size and varies widely by school location.
- Establishing and maintaining a long-term relationship with a school appears substantially more important for over-time salary growth than lateral moves from one school to another.
- Women and men who lead Orthodox schools are not being compensated equally, in terms of both salary and benefits.

These findings highlight that the field has room to grow, support, and nurture our school leaders to help our schools and children thrive.

Prizmah is able to provide additional comparative data to heads of schools and board members upon request. We invite your partnership to ensure that, together, we continue to strengthen our vibrant Jewish day school and yeshiva ecosystem.

Acknowledgments

We offer our tremendous gratitude to the heads of school who participated in this survey, as well as field leaders who previewed a draft and provided generative feedback. Your participation has made this report and the analysis of the data collected possible.

With gratitude, we acknowledge the many professionals who helped with this report. Thank you to Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz from Rosov Consulting, who advised on the survey design and the report, along with Keirstin Miller at Rosov Consulting, who provided statistical analysis. Thank you to the various members of the Prizmah team, in particular, Elliott Rabin, Marcia Harwitz, Becca Nadolne, Ilisa Cappell, and others involved in many aspects of the survey and reporting from design to production.

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PRIZMAH AS NETWORK

Prizmah's vision is of a thriving, passionate, engaged, and committed network of Jewish day schools that shape our community for generations to come.

