

# A PORTRAIT OF JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS AND YESHIVAS

2020 BENCHMARKING REPORT



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

**As an association member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Prizmah has collected a wide array of information about Jewish schools using NAIS's online instrument, Data and Analysis for School Leadership (DASL).**

**The development of the 2020 Benchmark Report was led by Odelia Epstein, Director of the Knowledge Center at Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools. We are grateful for our partnership with NAIS.**

**You can read more about the project at:**

**[https://prizmah.org/DataAnalysis\\_SchoolLeadership](https://prizmah.org/DataAnalysis_SchoolLeadership)**



**Since its launch in 2019, the Prizmah Knowledge Center has been working toward developing a strategic and systematic approach to data collection and knowledge sharing, supporting day schools and yeshivas with much-needed insight into key areas of school operations.**

Our focus on data and analytics is driven by the goal of giving day school leaders like you valuable information that can guide strategy, goals and vision for your schools. Benchmarking gives school leaders a window into peer schools. It allows for schools to understand their own trends in the context of larger local and field-wide trends and aids in strategic goal setting. Data collection and analysis require a high amount of cooperation and trust, for which Prizmah is uniquely positioned. Working closely with school leaders, we strive to assist you in understanding trends, how your school compares to similar schools and how data can support your decision-making.

Through a partnership with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Prizmah has collected a wide array of information about Jewish schools, using NAIS's instrument called Data and Analysis for School Leadership (DASL). Participation in DASL enables Jewish day schools and yeshivas to accomplish many important goals:

1. Obtaining a portrait of our field as a whole
2. Receiving customizable data based on region, school size and other criteria
3. Gaining comparative data of other independent schools

Participating schools have access to custom benchmarking. As you will see below, our partnership with NAIS has enabled Prizmah to customize the data collection according to the specific nature and interests of Jewish schools. This tool is simply nonpareil in its ability to provide stakeholders with information that you can use to assess and understand your school's performance across multiple systems.

School leaders are seeking answers to questions about field-wide financial metrics, and we are pleased to offer this first trend report for Jewish day schools and yeshivas.

## Parameters of the Report

This year represented a trial run for Prizmah to partner with NAIS on DASL. The report that follows presents some of the aggregate data, offering an initial portrait of the field. This is a strong start, and we are hopeful that we can build greater participation in the coming year. Participating schools represent the range of schools with which Prizmah works, including the full spectrum of school size, location and denomination. Although the sample cannot be considered as wholly representative of the field—the number of participating schools in this pilot phase is building to a critical mass, and is weighted heavily toward certain communities more than others—it affords a portrait of the field pre-COVID-19 that can give a sense of a baseline for the changes that inevitably are occurring now and will continue to occur for the foreseeable future.

The report highlights financial data about Jewish day schools and yeshivas to assist schools in making data-informed decisions and determining benchmarks for improvement. Community-wide data on key financial metrics are available for schools in communities where numerous Jewish schools participated. Schools that use DASL are able to create custom benchmarking reports and choose which schools to compare themselves to. These cohorts can include schools in the same community or schools that have similar characteristics throughout North America. In the future, we hope more Jewish day schools use DASL, which will improve the data set and relevancy of the data to particular schools. The report can inform conversations on school performance along several axes.

## We Need You

We hope that you are able to gain insight on the field and your individual schools through this trend report. As our pilot phase continues, we invite you to partner with us. By joining other Jewish day schools and sharing your school's data in the upcoming data collection cycle, you will benefit from:

- access to customized benchmarking reports
- the data you want when you need it
- contributing to a deeper understanding of the field of Jewish day schools and yeshivas

This report is a sample of the type of data that is available and being collected. Additional fundraising, enrollment, revenue and expense and salary data is available to participating schools. To learn more about the survey and how to access this data, contact Prizmah's Knowledge Center Director Odelia Epstein at [OdeliaE@prizmah.org](mailto:OdeliaE@prizmah.org).

## The Data Set

In 2019, 77 Jewish day schools and yeshivas across the U.S. and Canada took part in data collection through DASL. Schools completed different numbers of questions in the survey, so the sample size varies for different metrics. The data was collected during the summer of 2019 about the 2018-2019 school year. This first year of our partnership with NAIS, we went through the survey cycle and learned from the experience prior to unveiling DASL to the larger Jewish day school community for the summer 2020 data collection cycle. NAIS conducted multiple levels of data validation to ensure the accuracy of the data. The number of schools that responded to each question is indicated.

## The Sample

REGION	TOTAL	PERCENT
Canada	18	23%
East (NJ, NY)	9	12%
Mid-Atlantic (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA)	9	12%
Midwest (IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WV, WI)	8	10%
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	1	1%
Southeast (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)	9	12%
Southwest (AZ, AR, CO, KS, LA, NM, OK, TX)	5	7%
West (AK, CA, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)	18	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

SCHOOL SIZE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Under 101	3	4%
101 – 200	18	23%
201 – 300	14	18%
301 – 500	21	27%
501 – 700	11	14%
Above 700	10	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

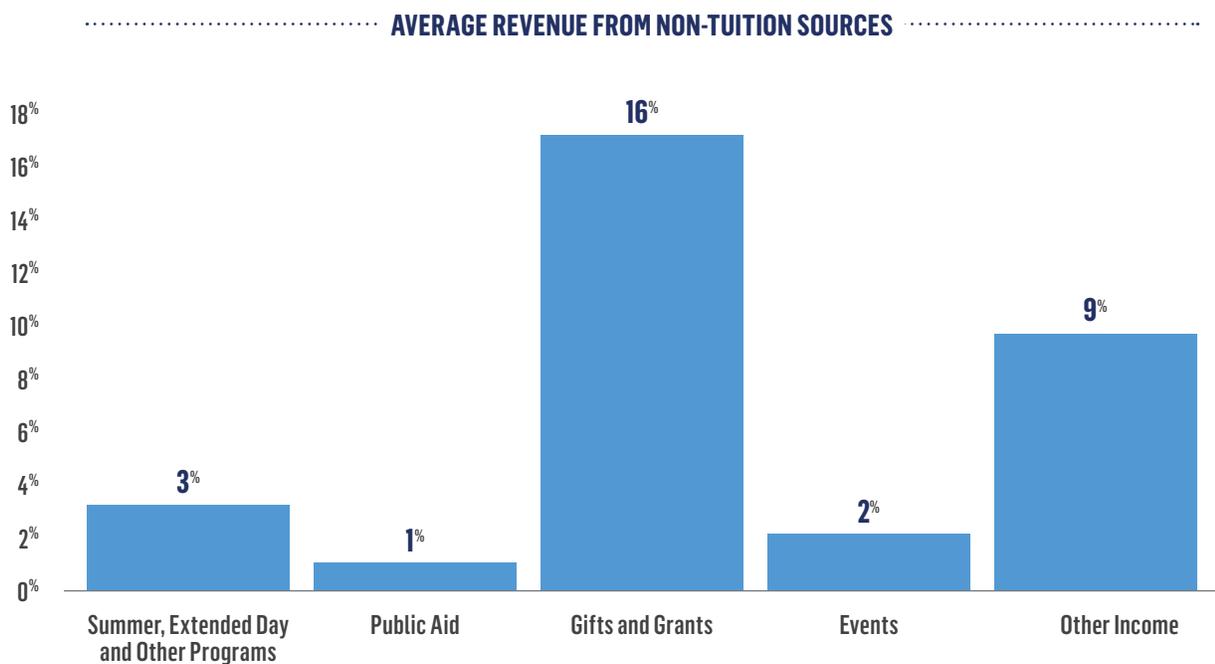
SCHOOL DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION	TOTAL	PERCENT
Community	26	34%
Conservative	13	17%
Orthodox	17	22%
Pluralistic	16	21%
Reform	5	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

The sample covers a wide range of schools along these three axes, and while it is not necessarily totally representative of the field, it does offer a clear profile of Jewish day schools and yeshivas. Our vision for this is that the number of schools that participate grows extensively so you can access the data that can help you make informed decisions on areas of strategic importance to your schools.

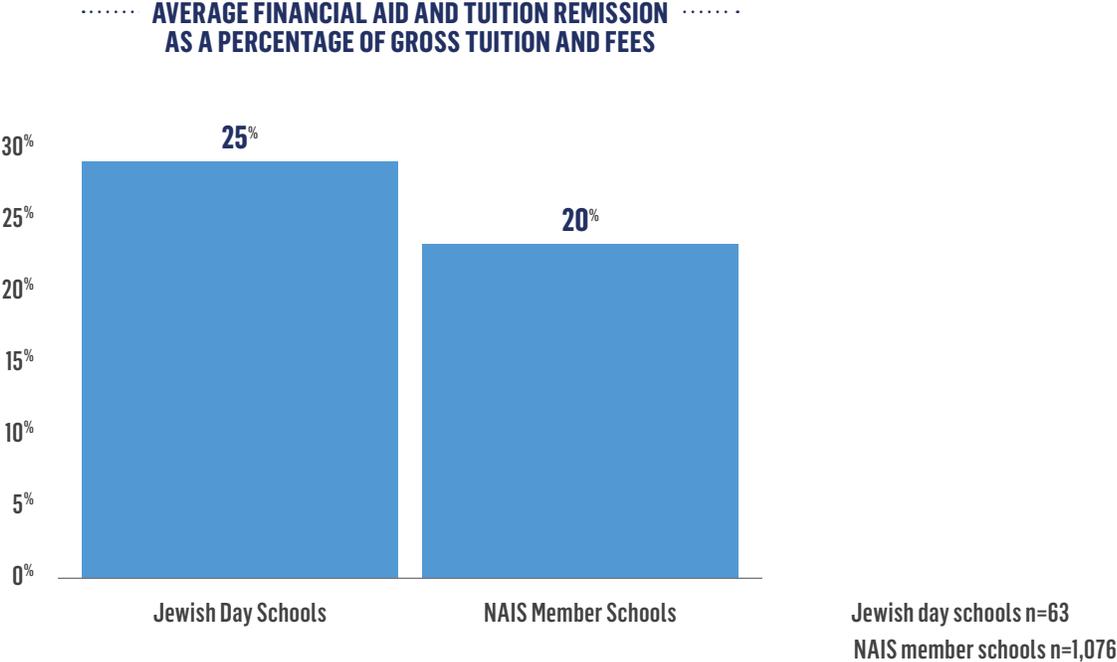
## Revenue

Schools receive revenue from multiple revenue streams including tuition, annual campaign, federations and endowment. This report will cover some basic statistics in the realm of school revenue and a few other key school metrics.

Income from tuition and the annual campaign composes the majority of schools' revenue. With 69% of school revenue coming from tuition, schools must find other sources of income to bridge the gap. The chart below shows the average income from non-tuition sources that cover the remainder of school revenue.



On average, federation support constitutes 3% of revenue and the annual campaign contributes 12% of revenue. Those amounts are reflected in the “gifts and grants” category above.



Total financial aid awarded composes 25% of gross tuition and fees revenue, on average for Jewish day schools, which is 5% higher than NAIS member schools. From the 54 Jewish schools that responded, \$126,000,000 was awarded in total financial aid.

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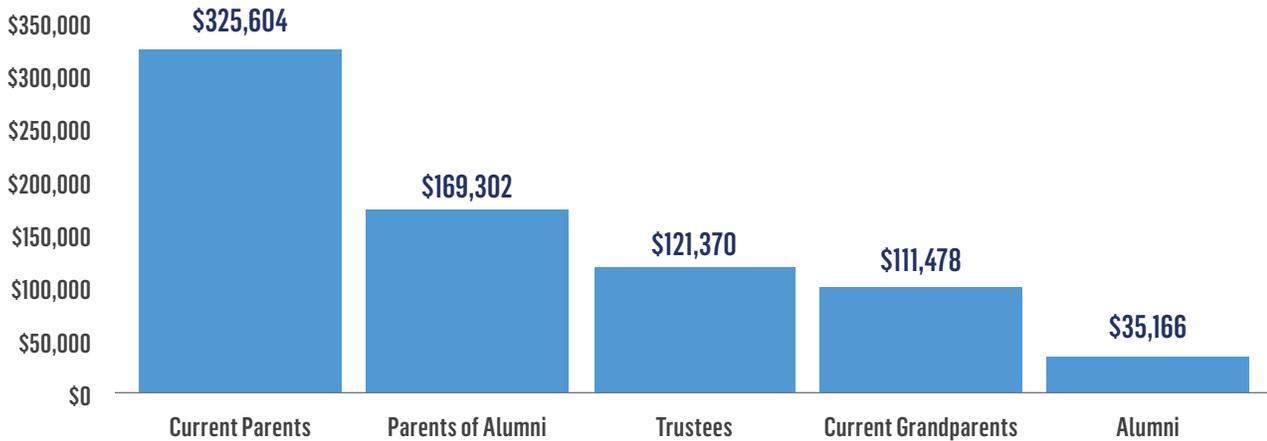
**\$923,779**  
**Average Total Annual Campaign**

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(n=48)

As fundraising is used to close the revenue gap between total budget costs and net tuition, schools turn to individual donors such as current parents, parents of alumni, board members, grandparents and alumni. Here are average totals broken down by donor types.

..... **AVERAGE TOTAL AMOUNT GIVEN BY SEGMENT TYPE** .....



- Total amount given by current parents n=46
- Total amount given by parents of alumni n=41
- Total amount given by trustees n=39
- Total amount given by current grandparents n=45
- Total amount given by alumni n=43

For each of these figures, the range of giving varies widely depending on the school. Prizmah believes that grandparents and alumni are two target populations for increased participation in fundraising. Grandparents often have significant assets and may be thinking about estate planning and wealth transference. Alumni at most schools are entering or in the midst of their prime earning years and should be cultivated for greater school support.

Endowments can provide a safety net of financial security to cover a host of expenses, including needed capital improvement, scholarship funds and professional development.

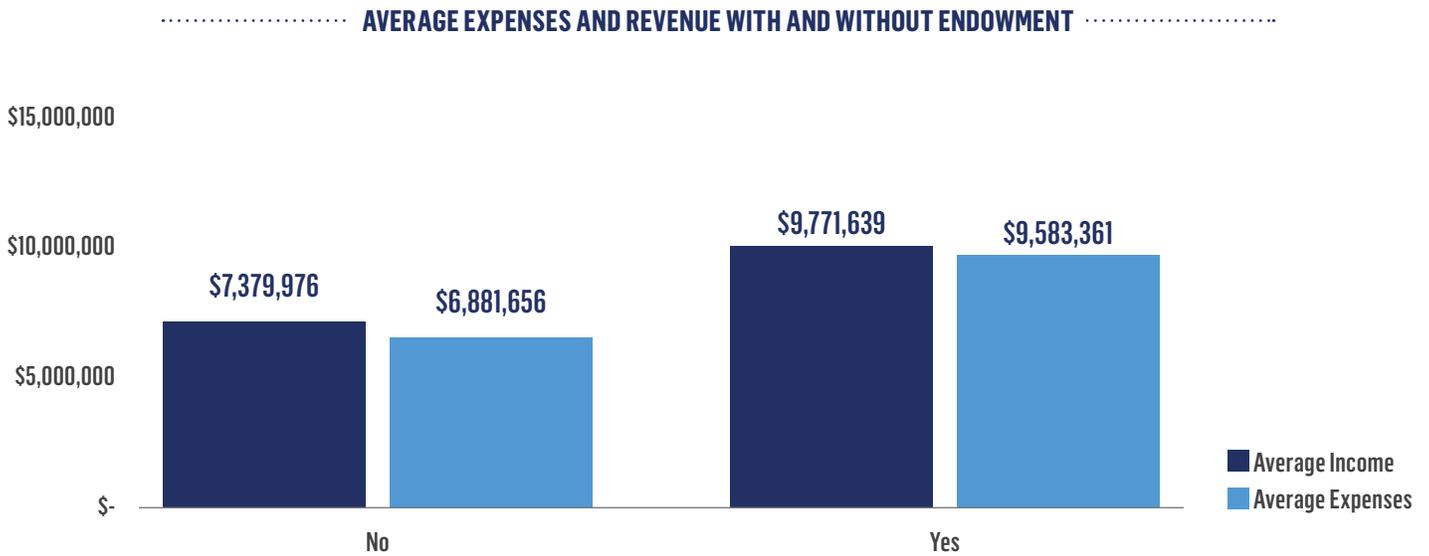
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**\$15,940**

**The Average Endowment per Student  
of Schools That Have an Endowment**

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We found that schools with endowments had on average larger budgets than those without endowments. (Of course, this gap can be due to many factors beyond endowment revenue.)



Yes Endowment=42 schools

No Endowment=24 schools

Of schools with an endowment, the average valuation is \$5,786,840.

Local federations often support day schools in their communities, and in many cases their support is critical. A 2018 report found that 73 federations invested \$52.3 million in 301 Jewish day schools in 2015-2016.<sup>1</sup> Typically, federations support schools either through per capita funding, scholarship funds, block grants, deficit funding or infrastructure support.

While the total funds invested sound high compared to our data collection, federation support makes up on average 3% of total day school revenue. Of course, the actual percentage varies by federation and school, with the contribution in some communities exceeding 10%.

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**\$707**  
**Average Federation Support  
per Student**

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(n=27)

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**3% of Revenue**  
**Average Federation Support  
as a Percentage of Revenue**

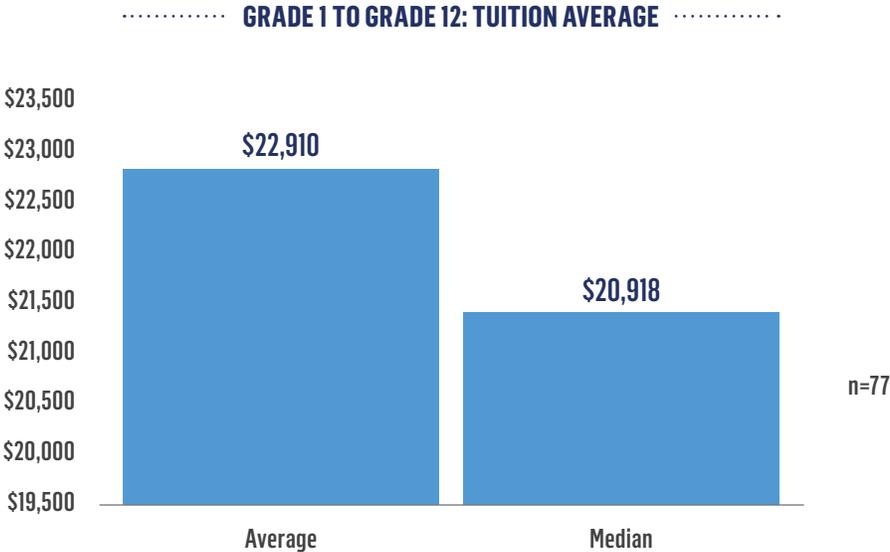
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(n=39)

<sup>1</sup> <https://prizmah.org/knowledge/resource/federation-jewish-day-school-funding-models>

Net tuition is where the bulk of school revenue comes from. Gross tuition is often too high for many families to afford.

In this sample, average gross tuition is between \$20,000 and \$23,000.



### Cost per Student

Cost per student is calculated by looking at the total costs divided by the total number of students. This calculation can help school leaders compare their schools to other schools.

	<b>JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS AND YESHIVAS</b>	<b>NAIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</b>
Median Cost per Student	\$25,977	\$25,854
N	42	Not Available

## Attrition

Attrition is a key indicator of a school's financial health. Schools leaders who are experiencing an increase in student attrition and those with other strategic questions related to enrollment are often interested in "normal" or "average" attrition rates.

	JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS AND YESHIVAS	NAIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
Average Attrition Rate	9.4%	10.5%
Median Attrition Rate	8.0%	8.7%
N	66	1511

As you can see, attrition is slightly lower at Jewish day schools and yeshivas than at independent schools overall.

## Judaic Studies and Hebrew Weekly Instructional Hours

Often heard from school leaders is the challenge of having enough time in providing a dual curriculum. Through DASL, we collected the number of weekly instructional minutes in Judaics and Hebrew from 51 Jewish day schools and yeshivas. Again, this information should not be taken as representative of the entire field.

**TABLE 1**

Non-Orthodox Day Schools, Number of Weekly Hebrew Instructional Hours

Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12
Hours per week	4.06	3.86	2.92
Number of schools	34	27	10

In the sample, the average number of hourly weekly Hebrew instruction decreases from elementary school to high school. In K-5, the average weekly instructional time in Hebrew ranges from 1.2 hours to 10.8 hours a week. In middle school, the number of instructional hours ranges from under an hour a week to 11.25 hours a week. In high school, the range changes to 1.3–4.3 hours a week.

**TABLE 2**

Non-Orthodox Day Schools, Number of Weekly Judaics Instructional Hours

Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12
Hours per week	4.51	4.81	4
Number of schools	32	25	10

Participating Conservative, Reform and Community day schools spend more hours in Judaics instruction a week than in Hebrew instruction. In K-5, the average weekly instructional time in Judaic studies ranges from 1 to 13 hours a week. In middle school the range increases from 1.5 to 13 hours a week, while in high school, the range is 2.5 to 9 hours a week. The minimum number of Judaics instructional hours in high school is 2.5 as compared to 1.5 in middle and elementary school.

**TABLE 3**

Orthodox Day Schools, Number of Weekly Hebrew Instructional Hours

Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12
Hours per week	3.35	2.73	2.74
Number of schools	7	7	9

The sample size for Orthodox schools is smaller than for non-Orthodox schools. From these schools, we see that the average weekly hours of Hebrew instruction is highest in K-5 and remain stable in grades 6 to 12. Judaic studies instruction ranges from 1.3 hours a week to 6.25 hours a week.

**TABLE 4**

Orthodox Day Schools, Number of Weekly Judaics Instructional Hours

Grades	K-5	6-8	9-12
Hours per week	8.74	10.94	12.73
Number of schools	8	8	9

Orthodox day school students spend on average close to 9 hours a week in Judaic instruction. Time spent in Judaic instruction increases on average by 4 hours a week from the younger to older grades. In K-5, the minimum hours of instruction in this sample is 3 while the max is 14. In grades 6-8, the minimum hours of instruction is 6 and the max is 15, and in high school the minimum is 8 while the max is 29.

Cumulatively, Jewish day schools and yeshivas provide an impressive amount of Judaic and Hebrew studies instruction to students in North America. Let's celebrate the education of the next generation of Jews and fostering Jewishly literate children.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the metrics reported here are examples drawn from enormous pools of data available for schools that participate in DASL. Additional data is available on key school financial metrics. Our vision is that Jewish day schools and yeshivas have access to relevant data about peer schools that will help school leaders make informed strategic decisions. Be a part of this vision. Let's do it b'yachad (together).