

# What are the Numbers of Jewish Educators and Students in Formal Jewish Educational Settings?

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Summer 2002*

How many Jewish educators and students are there in formal Jewish educational settings? The answer to this question is tricky, since the field of quantitative measurement of Jewish educators and target audiences is not strong. While this article will present some data, it must be noted that all the statistics are only estimates.

CAJE has taken the initiative to prod the national organizations and philanthropic foundations to work cooperatively in the gathering and sharing of data and ultimately set up a permanent longitudinal study of the field of Jewish education in North America. In the fall of 2002, when the national Jewish population numbers are released, clearer numbers on the size of the potential target audiences in the US will be available. However, these data will not give us any more information about the number of Jewish educators.

ADCA, the Association of Directors of Central Agencies, is currently completing a census of the Jewish educational institutions in their areas. They rely on reporting by the central agencies, but because not all of the central agencies collect these figures, making the survey incomplete. In this new survey, they are including both student and teacher counts. However, we know that the teacher counts will be inaccurate, since they have no way of adjusting for the fact that many teachers work at more than one institution. In fact, according to the CAJE demographic data, 32% of the CAJE members who identify themselves as teachers work in more than one institution. In addition, ADCA collected data for the year 1999-2000. At that time, they estimated that their data reflected 90% of the North American Jewish population. These are the ADCA figures that have been used in the analysis found in this article.

## Congregational Schools

In 1962, there were 540,000 students enrolled in this system. In 1988, the estimate was 280,000 (figures from *A Time to Act*, University Press of America, 1990). The number of pupil hours spent in these schools also has declined. Indications are that since 1988 the size of this population has either stayed stable or has somewhat increased. Wertheimer (Avichai study, 2001) put the size at roughly 300,000 students. BJE-New York data show that, for the 1992-93 academic year, there were 37,531 students in the New York area; by 1998-1999, this number had increased by 16.4% to 43,691. It is unclear whether this trend is also true for the rest of the country. In 1988, there were 1,700 schools (this figure is similar to the one AB Data has supplied to CAJE). ADCA counts 225,900 students in 1,258 schools in the US and Canada combined. If we add the 10% ADCA estimates to have missed in their count due to the fact that there are no central agencies (the source of ADCA's data) in some areas, we come to a total count of 250,000 children and 1,384 schools. At this point, it is not clear which data are more reliable.

The question now becomes how many educators (full-time or part-time) work in this system? Based on a recent e-mail survey of 64 teachers of congregational schools within CAJE, we estimate that there are 10 children per teacher. We had to take into account two factors: Many teachers teach at more than one institution (32% of the CAJE members) and many students are taught by more than one teacher (e.g., one on Sunday and another one in the middle of the week). Based on this information, the total teacher population is 30,000, if we use Wertheimer's estimate. Add to this approximately 3,000 administrators and specialists and one arrives at 33,000. If we use the ADCA data, I would estimate the total teacher population at 25,000. Add the same 3,000 administrators and specialists and the total figure is 28,000. Averaging these two numbers gives a total of 30,500.

### **Day Schools**

Here, the research is far better. The Avichai Census (1998-99) by Marvin Schick gives a particularly clear picture. In 1988, there were 120,000 students enrolled in Day Schools; that population is now estimated by Schick and Wertheimer at 200,000. In the table below, the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) schools and students are separated from the rest of the schools. This population is significantly different in philosophy of education (expressed in approaches to teaching *Ivrit* and in having a different methodology of teaching, such as less learning through open ended exploration and questioning). The question is what to do with the data on Chabad and what Schick calls "Centrist Orthodox" schools. Even though Chabad schools outside the New York metropolitan area attract many non-Orthodox students, in philosophy, these schools are closer to the Haredi system. Therefore, we have included figures from these schools with those of the Haredi system. Schick defines Centrist and Modern Orthodox as separate sex and coed schools, respectively. However, many of the separate sex schools are, in fact, Modern-Orthodox in philosophy. Therefore, the figures include half of the "Centrist Orthodox" schools in each one of the sub-groups, as per the table below. ADCA's numbers for day schools are very close to Schick's, so they do not change the picture significantly.

The question again becomes how many educators (full-time or part-time) work in this system? The educator-child ratio here is quite clear. The US Government has collected these data based on FTE's, which means "full-time equivalents". So, if two teachers work half-time, the government counts them as 1 FTE. For planning purposes, we would count this as two teachers. High schools and early childhood have a higher ratio of educator per student than elementary schools. We compared the actual staff (including specialists and administrators) with the government FTE number in one large school. The difference comes to 15%. I have used this number throughout the table listed below. Actually, small schools and high schools employ more part-time staff, so this 15% adjustment leads to a conservative estimate of the total number of educators. Overall, the 1998-1999 government ratio is 10.1 students per teacher in the Jewish day schools (as compared to 13.2 in private schools). The rates are not equal for the different systems; the Haredi schools have more students per teacher than the non-Haredi schools. In the table below, we have used the student and school numbers from Schick, which we combined with the 1998-1999 US Department of Education teacher ratios (adjusted by 15%) to arrive at the number of teachers. Based on this, the total teacher population is 22,000. Of these, 11,000 are in the Haredi schools and another 11,000 in the non-Haredi schools. There have been no follow-up studies of the Schick study. Based on conversations with PEJE and other anecdotal information, the number of schools and students is still expanding.

	# of schools	# of students	# of teachers	ratio teachers to students adjusted
Chabad	44	7438	781	9.5
Chassidic	81	39059	4103	9.5
Yeshivas	172	47643	5005	9.5
1/2 Centrist Orthodox	40	10252	1270	8.1
Total Haredi	337	104392	11158	
Modern Orthodox	92	26961	3868	7.0
1/2 Centrist	40	10252	1270	8.1
Total Orthodox	132	37213	5138	
Total Orthodox	132	37213	5138	
	# of schools	# of students	# of teachers	ratio teachers to students adjusted
Conservative (SSDS)	63	17563	2348	7.5
Community (RAVSAK)	75	14849	2055	7.2
Reform (Pardes)	20	4485	676	6.6
Immigration and Outreach	31	5136	737	7.0
Total non-Haredi	321	79246	10954	
TOTAL	658	183638	22113	

### Early Childhood

Early childhood is very much a neglected area, both in terms of Jewish aspects of professional development and in terms of advocacy. Enrollment as a percentage of the total available population is far higher than any other system. It has been pointed out that early childhood is an important portal of entry into the Jewish community – both for their children and for parents, many of whom are not affiliated (Wertheimer). The number of participants in 1988 was estimated at 50,000. The number of programs is probably over 1,500. The numbers keep going up every year. For example, when looking at enrollment figures from the BJE New York area, the total enrollment for 0-5 year olds jumped in 2001 to 33,648 from 29,629 in 2000, a 14% increase in one year. The ADCA figures for early childhood are 93,992. When we add 10% (for those in areas without central agencies), we come to an estimated total of 103,000 students. Please note that there is an overlap between this population and the day school enrollment figures. Schick counts 30,000 three-to-five year olds in the day schools. However, enrollment of 4-year-olds could decline as a result of the increased availability of universal pre-K in the public schools.

The results of the extensive JECEP (Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership) survey of 150 early childhood programs will be out shortly; it was completed through the efforts of Ilene Vogelstein. From this survey, the ratio of educator to students is determined to be 6.2. This compares to a ratio of

6.7 from the 2001 BJE New York survey. Based on these ratios, the number of educators in the Jewish early childhood system is about 16,000.

### **Observations and Recommendations**

While this paper establishes some rough estimates for the number of Jewish educators in each one of the three formal systems of Jewish education, it is important to point out that the data are based on incomplete and outdated studies. CAJE strongly recommends that funding should be made available for ongoing longitudinal studies of those employed in the field of Jewish education. In light of the current personnel shortages, having better knowledge of the educators could make for better planning.

At the present time, by subtracting from the total 4,500 educators and 30,000 students, who are in the day school early childhood system, the figures are as follows:

	# of Educators	# of Students
Congregational School	30,500	250,000
Early Childhood	16,000	103,000
Day School	22,000	200,000
Adjusted Totals	60,000	520,000

CAJE has started follow-up studies in several areas:

- Jewish educators' attitudes towards their profession
- An analysis of benefits available, utilized, and desired by Jewish educators

These studies are being conducted so CAJE can better serve its members in terms of advocacy and services. CAJE's Hanukat CAJE program is currently discussing providing educators with the necessary information so they can better advocate for themselves in terms of salaries and benefits.

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