



2015-2016 Census of Milwaukee Area Jewish School Enrollment: An Overview

This year's census was conducted by the Coalition for Jewish Learning (CJL), the Education Department of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. The census is based on responses from local schools.

CJL's annual census documents that the number of children enrolled in Milwaukee Area Jewish schools declined slightly from 1717 to 1688 continuing a steady decline which began in 2009-2010. Overall there was a 1.5% drop (29 students) in enrollment from last year's total. While this is a moderate decrease, it does represent the continuation of a downward trend which has continued for 16 years.

Analysis of these figures is limited by the absence of a full census of school age Jewish children. A decline in attendance could be attributed to a number of factors, but most educators cite a decline in the number of Jewish children which is reflected in their enrollment numbers.

Pre-School Enrollment

There was a decrease of 6 students at the preschool level, from 421 last year to 415 this year. This is in contrast to last year when pre-school enrollment grew.

Day School Population

Day school enrollment is very close to last year's total **rising** by five students from 627 to 632. Just like last year, there is considerable variance on a school by school basis. Some schools grew bigger and some became smaller.

Religious School Trend Continues

There was a decrease of 28 students in religious school enrollment from 669 to 641. This 4% decrease is consistent with the trend of recent years.

Overall Trend

If we examine the total number of children getting a Jewish education in Milwaukee over the past 23 years, we discover an interesting trend:

- The percentage of the Jewish children getting a Jewish education through a preschool has increased from 17% to 25%,
- The percentage of the Jewish children getting a Jewish education through a day school has increased from 28% to 38%,
- The percentage of the Jewish children getting a Jewish education through a supplementary school has decreased from 55% to 38%.

In other words, there are still many more children getting their Jewish education in a part time setting (supplementary school) than a full time setting (preschool and supplementary school).

However if we look at the trends, of the children whom parents are giving a Jewish education, a higher percentage are choosing a full time setting (preschool or day school) than a part time setting (supplementary school) than in years past.

I wish to thank the schools for their cooperation which allows us to provide this important information to the community.