



2016-2017 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 from 1651 to 1599 continuing a steady decline which began in 2009-2010. Overall there was a 3% drop (52 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 17 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 some educators cite a decline in the number of Jewish children which is reflected in their enrollment numbers. Lower rates of synagogue affiliation also impact the number of children in supplementary schools.

Pre-School Enrollment

There was an increase of 2 students at the preschool level, from 415 last year to 417 this year. This is in contrast to last year when pre-school enrollment declined.

Day School Population

Day school enrollment increased by 7 students from 595 to 602. 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 61 students in religious school enrollment from 641 to 580. This 10% decrease is larger than what has been seen in recent years.

Overall Trend

If we examine the total number of children getting a Jewish education in Milwaukee over the past 24 years, we discover an interesting trend:

- The percentage of the Jewish children getting a Jewish education through a **preschool** has **increased** from 17% to 26%,
- 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 36%.

New

For the first time since we have been recording census data (1992), more children in Milwaukee are getting their Jewish education through Day School (602) than through Religious School (580).

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