



2019-2020 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 rose from 1622 to 1644. This slight rise (1.3%) reflects a small rise in the number of preschool students and a larger rise in the number of day school students. While this is a small increase, it continues the growth of the past few 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.

Preschool Enrollment

There was a 1% increase (6 students) at the preschool level, from 456 last year to 462 this year. This is the highest ever preschool enrollment (since we have started doing the census) with the exception of 2008 when there were 470 children.

Day School Population

There was 8% increase (55 students) in day school enrollment, from 611 last year to 666 this year. Just like last year, there is considerable variance on a school by school basis, but overall the schools grew. All the schools grew, stayed the same, or decreased by 1 student. This is the highest day school enrollment since 2008-2009. It is worth noting that Milwaukee Jewish Day School added a new K3 program this year and this grade accounts for an increase of 16 (out of 55) students.

Religious School Trend Continues

There was a 9% decrease (42 students) in religious school enrollment from 531 to 489. This is largest decrease in the past four years. In 1993 (the first year of the census), there were 1,412 students attending 11 different religious schools. Today we less than half the number of students attending 8 schools.

Overall Education and Engagement

Milwaukee can be proud of our education and engagement programs. There are hundreds of teens involved in youth groups. There are hundreds of young families engaged through PJ library.

Questions that Remain to be Answered:

- “How many Jewish children in Milwaukee are not getting any Jewish education?”
- “Are there families looking for more / different Jewish educational opportunities?”
- “How can we engage more children in Jewish education?”

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



2019-20 Census

	2019-2020	2018-2029	2017-2018
Preschools (3 schools)	462	456	437
Day Schools (6 schools)	666	611	600
Religious Schools (8 schools)	489	531	550
Individualized Education (i.e. tutoring)	31	24	24
Census Grand Totals	1,648	1,622	1,611