



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Fourth Census of Jewish Day Schools Shows Clear Enrollment Trends**

**– Enrollment has grown by 37% since 1998 –**

New York, October 30 – The fourth census of Jewish day schools in the United States conducted by Dr. Marvin Schick was released today by The AVI CHAI Foundation, which sponsored the research. Conducted at five-year intervals, beginning with the 1998-99 school year, this research provides a clear picture of trends in the day school system over an extended period of time. The statistics were self-reported by every known Jewish day school in the US.

“The participation rate of 100% for known schools is a remarkable accomplishment,” says Yossi Prager, North American Executive Director of The AVI CHAI Foundation. “Anyone interested in the Jewish day school field benefits from this achievement. We are indebted to Dr. Schick for his dedication to this project.”

This census demonstrates an overall increase in day school enrollment. There were nearly **255,000 students** enrolled from the four-year-old level through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Jewish elementary and secondary schools in the 2013-14 school year. This represents an increase of 12% since the previous census in 2008-9 and 37% since 1998-99. Enrollment has grown by 70,000 students in this span of 15 years. Most of that growth is in the Chassidic and Yeshiva World schools, which have grown by nearly 110% and 60% respectively.

Students are enrolled in **861 day schools**, significantly more than the 802 schools reported in the previous census and the 676 accounted for in 1998-99. This increase is predominantly found in the Chassidic and Yeshiva World sectors as well.

In the non-Orthodox sector, Community school enrollment has increased, whereas enrollment has declined in non-Orthodox schools overall. Non-Orthodox enrollment now constitutes 13% of all day school enrollment, a decrease from 20% as reported in 1998-99. This data, explains Dr. Schick, “presents the community with an enormous challenge: will day school continue to be a principal instrument for Judaic strengthening among those segments of American Jewish life for whom day school education is a critical determinant of young people’s future Judaic commitment?”

Amongst the Orthodox schools, where enrollment in Chassidic and Yeshiva World schools has grown dramatically, another communal challenge arises. As Dr. Schick explains, this challenge is “whether there will be sufficient resources to provide adequately for the growth in these two sectors.”

Small school size is a consistent feature of the Jewish day school world. In each of the four censuses, approximately 40% of day schools have fewer than 100 students. “The existence of so many small schools raises,” explains Dr. Schick, “educational, financial and communal concerns. Many of these schools will not survive, while others will continue to struggle with their small enrollments. This has been a phenomenon we continue to see over the last 15 years.”

There are Jewish day schools in 37 states and the District of Columbia. In ten of these states, enrollment is below 100, and in 16 states, there has been a decline in number of students of the course of the four censuses. New York and New Jersey are, to a great extent, the center of the day school world, with enrollment growing by 47,000 or 45% in New York and by nearly 21,000 or 116% in New Jersey between 1998 and 2013. This reinforces the financial challenges for the New York and New Jersey communities as they must consider ways in which to address growing capital and operating needs.

“As AVI CHAI plans to sunset in 2020, this fourth census is the last one that will directly inform our grantmaking,” explains Mem Bernstein, Chairman of The AVI CHAI Foundation. “These censuses have provided our Trustees and staff with data-rich perspectives on our work. Where it foretold challenges facing the community, it offered us, and others dedicated to the day school field, rich opportunities to make a difference through our grantmaking. We hope that this census and the next, which will be the last AVI CHAI-sponsored census, will provide useful information as the day school field continues to evolve and grow.”

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The [full report is available online](#) on the AVI CHAI website.

For more information or to arrange for an interview with Dr. Schick, please contact Deborah Fishman at [dfishman@avichaina.org](mailto:dfishman@avichaina.org).