

## Common Misconceptions about Day Schools

**I always thought that day schools were insular and “shtetl-like.” Doesn’t a day school segregate children from the “real world”?**

Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are bombarded with images and values of contemporary society. Day schools provide a framework of Jewish values and living from which students engage in the larger world while possessing a strong sense of who they are. Many schools take seriously their commitment to social justice and *tikkun olam*, and students engage in a wide range of activities beyond the confines of the school, including sports leagues and other inter-school competitions. It is well-documented that awareness of one’s own ethnic group is critical to social development and identity formation, and to the capacity to be an active and committed citizen within the broader community.

**Aren’t day schools just for the Orthodox?**

That was true of the day school enterprise in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Since the 1970s and accelerating into the 1980s and 1990s, significant growth has taken place in non-Orthodox communities as well. In the past decade, the greatest growth in day schools has been in non-Orthodox communities. Increasingly, parents recognize that day schools provide an excellent education, and more and more communities and philanthropists recognize that day schools offer the greatest hope for Jewish continuity.

**Why do day schools need to fundraise? Shouldn’t tuition and federation support cover all the costs?**

At nearly every day school in North America (and nearly all independent schools), there is a “tuition gap” between what parents pay and the actual per capita cost of education. This gap varies with the type of school. In community day schools, for example, tuition on average covers only 68% of per student costs. Additionally, a commitment to providing a day school education to all who desire it comes at a great cost. Significant scholarship funds must be secured. Federation support typically covers less than 15% of the average day school budget. The day school enterprise’s annual budget is more than \$2 billion. As such, it requires diverse and broad funding support from communities, parents, and individual supporters.

**Okay, I understand the need for additional fundraising. But shouldn't this support come from people who have a direct connection to the school, like parents or grandparents?**

Absolutely. Parents, grandparents, and alumni are among the biggest supporters of day school education, yet they alone are not able to provide sufficient support for day schools. If day schools are to successfully fulfill their mission of educating a growing number of children who will lead and live full Jewish lives, they must have a wide base of support. Day schools have a broad impact on the larger Jewish community, and thus must be sustained by it. A growing number of communities recognize that an investment in day schools is a wise decision.