

**An Exploratory Analysis of Different Weekly Schedules in Modern Orthodox Jewish  
Schools and Student/Rabbi Relationships**

**by**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**EdD in Jewish Educational Leadership and Innovation**

**in the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration**

**Yeshiva University**

**June 2024**

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## **Abstract**

### **An Exploratory Analysis of Different Weekly Schedules in Modern Orthodox Jewish Schools and Student/Rabbi Relationships**

The purpose of this study was to consider alternate schedule configurations of the traditional five-day school week, and to explore if unique modifications of the five-day school week would predict students' relationships with their Rabbis in all-boys, Modern Orthodox Jewish day schools. This was considered through the theoretical frameworks of Culture and Path Dependence. This study was a secondary analysis using data from three schools within a dataset from a study of high school students in Modern Orthodox Jewish schools who completed the JewBALE 2.0 (Jewish Beliefs Actions Living Evaluation) comprised of 167 questions regarding Jewish belief and practice (Goldberg, 2016). The study also included the Duke Health Profile and a Socio-Religious Scale of Personal Beliefs. (Parkerson et al, 1990) The schools were similar in population types, levels of religious observance, and other factors, allowing for consideration of differences found between student relationships with rabbis as potentially a function of the schools' alternative schedule configurations. The results suggest that students have a more positive relationship with rabbis in schools with a Monday-Friday schedule. Further study is needed to consider other variables and explanations for the impact of schedules on relationships between rabbis and students. The findings suggest that alternative schedule configuration may be a factor to consider for school leaders.

## Acknowledgments/Dedication

The completion of this Dissertation is a generational accomplishment. My grandmothers both valued education and the pursuit of knowledge was something that delighted them both to no end. The inspiration of Grandma Goldman, who loved looking at *The Times* and took such pride in academic achievements, and Grandma Gloria who graduated Queens College as a member of its Adult Collegiate Education experience, blew wind into my sails during this voyage, especially during the times that mattered most; when I was lost at sea or anchored to its floor.

To my parents, Janet and Ronald Goldman, I must give tremendous thanks for encouraging me to get my Doctorate and for their love and support my entire life. The milieu they provided for me while growing up, libraries, music, art, and culture, coupled with a commitment to service to Shul and school, was the foundation on which this paper was built.

Thank you to my in-laws as well, Abby and Dennis Waldman, for their support throughout this whole process and for their encouragement. They too share the values I was brought up with and I am grateful for their enthusiasm and support.

Thank you to my Doctoral Advisor, Dr. Scott Goldberg, for his guidance, time, and support throughout these many years. On a professional and on a personal level, he was always there for me and I could not have done this without him. Dr. Goldberg sets the standard for a Ben Torah and is a true teacher.

To Dr. Rona Novick, the leader of Azrieli, who invited me into her actual home to work on the Dissertation, thank you for your support and for being the epitome of a caring professional.

Thank you to Dr. Ilana Turetsky for all her time and comments on this paper. It is truly something I can be proud of thanks to her insight, sensitivity, and diligence.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Yael Muskat and Dr. Deena Rabinovitch, for being part of the Defense Committee and for their time, thoughtfulness, and assistance.

Thank you to Shoshana Ross, our statistician, who was incredibly professional, and a thank you to Dr. Moshe Sokolow, Lousia Wolf, and Marian Reiss for everything they've done for me during my time at Azrieli.

I'd also like to acknowledge my colleagues at Rambam for their support these last few years. They were the ones holding down the fort at 15 Frost Lane and then 284 Mott Avenue while I was working on this degree.

Thank you to Rosh Mesivta, Rabbi Zev Meir Friedman and Rebbetzin Renee Friedman. The pride you take in this accomplishment makes me feel like I am part of your family; something which I am both honored and humbled by. I must also thank Principal Rabbi Yotav Eliach, Assistant Rosh Mesivta Rabbi Avi Herschman, and Assistant Principal Rabbi Avi Haar for their encouragement and support of my continued growth and development as an educator. Thank you to Naomi, Chanie, Mrs. Friedman, Shirley, Racheli, and Aaron for all the times you helped cover for me as well. I am blessed to be around a remarkable team of professionals, and I am grateful to work alongside all of you.

Thank you also to my siblings and their respective spouses, Jeremy and Naomi, Daniel and Ora, and Tali and Steven for their support and encouragement. Whenever I am around any of you I am inspired to work harder and strive higher.

To my children, Eliana, Noah, and Ezra. I hope you understand that in large part I worked on this Dissertation for all of you. I tried to live up to the standard set by my

grandparents and parents, and hope that I inspired all of you to be ever industrious and wisdom-hungry in the pursuit of whatever you do. I thank the three of you for your understanding of all those times I was away while working on this project and I hope you recognize the love I treasure for all of you.

Lastly, to my Asheit Chayil, Deena. You encouraged me to pursue this degree since day one. You have been the backbone of our family these last 20 years and you were the one taking care of the family all those times I missed entire Sundays and more working on this Dissertation. As ever, I appreciate that all of my accomplishments, such as they are, would not happen without you making me who I am and continue to become. Your love, help, understanding, and encouragement are the reason I was able to complete this book you now hold in your hands. There were many times while I was working on this Dissertation that I wasn't sure it could be done. The horse and the rider was not coming; the mariner was alone on a wide wide sea.; worn out tools were the only ones available. That is when I thought of you. And I kept going. Trying to reach you. That is why I dedicate this to you, Deena Chayne.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Appendices.....	xii
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 - Literature Review.....	4
The Significance of Student/Teacher Relationships in the School Setting.....	4
A Brief History of the Evolution of the Five-Day School Week.....	6
A Day of Reckoning: The Intersection of School and Work and the Fluke of Monday-Friday Education.....	8
School, Individuality, and Identity.....	10
Theoretical Rationales for School on Sunday.....	11
Theoretical Model: Path Dependence.....	15
Cultural Framework.....	16
Church School on Sunday.....	19
Chapter 3 - Research Questions/Hypotheses.....	22
Chapter 4 - Methodology.....	24
Chapter 5 - Results.....	31
Chapter 6 - Discussion.....	37
Relationship to Rabbi Based on Track.....	37
Rabbi Relationship to School Schedule.....	37
Things to Note for Schools Regarding Sunday School.....	38
Some Sunday Considerations for the Field.....	39



The Commuter Effect.....	40
Post-COVID-19 and Sunday.....	40
Preparations of Rabbis Who Teach on Sundays.....	41
Phylacteries and Religious Practices.....	41
Mental Health and Phylacteries.....	42
Limitations.....	42
Suggestions for Sunday.....	43
Implications of the Field.....	47
Conclusions.....	50
References.....	51
Appendixes.....	56

**List of Tables**

Table 1: JewBALE 2.0 Breakdown.....26

## List of Figures

Figure 1: <i>Differences in Tracked Judaic Studies Honors, Depending on the Type of School</i> .....	32
Figure 2: <i>Differences in Tracked Secular Studies Honors, Depending on the Type of School</i> .....	33
Figure 3: <i>Differences in Judaic Studies Grades, Depending on the Type of School</i> .....	34
Figure 4: <i>Relationship to Rabbi for Different School Schedule</i> .....	35

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: All School History Related Information History of the Early Schools and the Integration Church Values.....	56
Appendix B: Adult Vs. Child Salary Comparison in Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century America.....	72
Appendix C: Democracy and American Westward Expansion.....	73
Appendix D: School Culture and Emerging Youth Identity.....	74
Appendix E: Definition of Terms.....	75



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

To paraphrase Irving Howe, uniformity, so far as education is concerned, is filled with variation. The traditions that are taken for granted: the structure of a day, week, month, and calendar year appear to have been formed *ex nihilo*. Occasionally questioned, revised, reformed, and repackaged, the branding may change but old traditions, even when they appear under a new guise, endure. The current format for the five-day a week school schedule did not emerge arbitrarily. It has roots that go far back and developed under the assumption that schedules that promote more consistent interaction between students and teachers in school is better. Five-days a week has been, for some time, seen as the optimal number of school days. Some schools have experimented with the four-day week and results initially indicate that there is little to no drop off on students' test scores. This seems to call into question the heralded wisdom of the five-day school week. How much more so for schools that actually have instituted a six-day school week?

The Modern Orthodox Yeshiva All-Boys High School system has experimented with a "school on Sunday Model" that allows for Sunday as a sixth school day. There are numerous forms of this configuration: some schools have school every Sunday while some have on only alternate Sundays. Some schools close on Friday and replace it with Sunday. Sunday becomes the fifth day of school but students have their "day off" at a time when the remainder of the world does not. The "school on Sunday" model, (not to be confused with "Sunday School" a day of schooling that has connotations of an extra day of school either for Christians as run by local Churches, or for Jewish students who do not attend full time day school as offered by synagogues) in the case of the three all-boys Yeshiva high schools to be discussed in this study, always only includes Judaic Studies subjects.

For Jewish schools, as important as content taught in Jewish subjects is the bond between students and Judaic Studies teachers, usually Rabbis, who serve as important role models in communicating Jewish values and living. Sunday school hours must therefore be considered as more than a mechanism for academic improvement. That is to suggest that although the learning may be less than ideal—due to the fact that some adolescents may not want to be in school on Sunday—*just* “being there” on a Sunday in a Yeshiva environment, with a Rabbi by the student’s side may have non-academic benefits in cementing the much-valued bond between student and Rabbi.

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the impact of the traditional five-day school week and to explore if exceptions to the five-day school week have adverse or beneficial impacts, as it relates to student relationships to their Rabbis. To provide a socio-historical context, this paper will trace the history of education in America and the relationship between the five-day work week or 40-hour work week and the five-day school week. This will be explored through the theoretical frameworks of Culture and Path Dependence. If indeed five-days is best, then the question becomes, would a six-day Yeshiva day school option be better for the students’ student/Rabbi relationship or is “too much” schooling detrimental to the relationship, echoing findings regarding work week length. This paper relies on a secondary analysis of a dataset of high school students in Modern Orthodox Jewish schools who completed the JewBALE 2.0 (Jewish Beliefs Actions Living Evaluation) comprised of 167 questions to gain insight into the beliefs of these students regarding G-d and the Jewish religious framework of Jewish law known as “Halacha” (Goldberg, 2016). This paper will specifically investigate the responses from the 58 students from school E, 34 from school N, and 43 from School U and will analyze their

student/Rabbi relationship controlling for academic track, religious observance as measured by wearing yarmulkas and phylacteries, and students' scores on the Duke Health Profile (Parkerson et al, 1990). This paper takes into account the "Alternative Configuration," the different iterations of the school on Sunday "schedule" in the three participating schools and its potential impact on students' relationships to their Rabbis.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### The Significance of Student/Teacher Relationships in the School Setting

It has become a common refrain that more and more students must like their teachers and feel like their teachers care about them in order for them to be motivated to learn (Farhah et al, 2021). While in the past the teacher/student relationship was built on a model of teacher as the educator whose sole purpose was to have students absorb his/her teaching, the relationship model has come to prominence and in some circles is considered the dominant factor in predicting whether students will learn (Cui, 2022). This model suggests students who do not feel close to their teachers do not feel safe in the classroom and are therefore not open to learning, resulting in curiosity and communication being stifled. As such, teachers are no longer mere disseminators of information, but rather are tasked to build relationships and respond to the needs of students within the classroom and beyond (Farhah et al, 2021).

If the relationship between student and teacher is important in secular educational settings, it may be at least equally if not more relevant in religious schools. “Rabbi,” in Hebrew, translates as “Teacher” but in modern and traditional usage a Rabbi is a role model, spiritual guide, and paragon of Jewish life. It is noted that teachers in most schools, not just religious schools, are expected to serve as role models; teaching honesty, integrity, executive functioning skills, and basic morality and citizenship while also teaching the curriculum (Lumpkin, 2008). Additionally, there is a correlation between the presence in an adolescent’s life of a positive role model and the ability to self-regulate, delay instant gratification, and can even result in increased levels of hopefulness about the future (Nakanishi et al, 2019). While teachers at the high school level are assumed and encouraged to be role models in many institutions, it is sometimes but not always the case that they are there to *just* teach

and perhaps also model quality behavior as part of the “hidden curriculum” (Wall and Hall, 2016). The Rabbi, however, in the Yeshiva system is by definition, a role model and the living embodiment of Jewish or Halachic life. To that end, the significance of the Rabbi/student relationship cannot be underscored enough. Rabbis and teachers seek to craft, mold, and uphold a tight knit bond with their students as a primary means of facilitating learning (Farhah et al, 2021) and to not do so puts their students’ learning at risk.

Students’ attitudes toward and relationship with the Rabbi are particularly important as in many cases the Rabbi becomes almost a stand in for their attitude towards Judaism. The concept of “Keshet” or connection to Jewish tradition and life is mentioned in many Yeshiva schools’ mission statements and echoed by parents and administration. When parents are concerned that a student is having issues with prayers or is asking questions regarding the authenticity of the religion, the solution is often to connect him to a “rebbe,” an affectionate term for one’s personal guide in the form of a Rabbi, hoping that through such a connection, issues will be resolved. The import of this relationship is so great that in many Yeshivas, the measure of success in a student’s Jewish education is often based more on his connection with a rebbe than it is based on his grades in classes of Bible, Jewish law, and Jewish thought and philosophy, or in other words, the actual curriculum.

As with many relationships, levels of closeness can be associated with proximity and time spent together (Brafman & Brafman, 2010). This is true with the Rabbi/student relationship but it is also true in general education and in many areas of work. More time together leads to better relationships (Brafman & Brafman, 2010) and therefore, the assumption that a six-day school week will lead to better relationships between Rabbis and students appears warranted. In their book *Click: The Forces Behind How We Fully Engage*

*With People, Work, and Everything We Do*, authors Ori and Rom Brafman see a classroom as a “defined community” where “spending time together in close quarters, or course, triggers the proximity response” (Brafman & Brafman, 2010). The *proximity response* is the closeness that develops amongst a set of individuals through physical closeness and repeated interactions. Repeated interactions, such as going to work or to school with the same people over an extended period of time, fosters an innate closeness just by virtue of being part of a shared, everyday world (Brafman & Brafman, 2010). Indeed, this notion of proximity is deemed so strong that the authors conclude that proximity trumps personality or mutual interests in determining closeness in relationships (Brafman & Brafman, 2010). To that end, quantitative hours count more than even qualitative hours in terms of determining the closeness and outcomes of relationships.

Numerous empirical studies document that student learning is supported by the positive relationships between teachers and students and that this relationship increases student self-esteem, effort, accomplishments and interest. (Cui, 2022) In the world of Jewish Torah studies, many Jewish educators might translate these findings to suggest, “Love the rebbe, love the Torah.” Adding a sixth day of school should allow for the proximity response to be engaged so a student should feel even closer to a Rabbi whom he sees on an additional day as opposed to a student who sees his Rabbi at the usual 9-5 Monday-Friday schedule, or, the unusual (and perhaps resented) Sunday-Thursday schedule.

### **A Brief History of the Evolution of the Five-Day School Week**

If one suspected that the traditional Monday-Friday school week was implemented as the result of best practices and careful research one would be mistaken. Contrary to what one might expect, the modern schooling system for high schools, replete with the five-day school

week; a more or less established curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic, etc. took a long and circuitous route to become what it is today. Once one understands how it was cobbled together based on a number of external factors, and not on the optimal needs of the students, one can understand how exploring Alternative Configuration of schedules can rightly be considered.

It is common knowledge if not sacred writ that the purpose of high school for almost everyone is to prepare students for college. This notion, however, is relatively new (for a more detailed look at the History of Early Schools in America, see Appendix A). In the mid-nineteenth century high school was not viewed as a de facto pathway toward college, even if it did consciously or inadvertently prepare students for the college curriculum (Lueck, 2018). From early on in the history of education it was understood that education, beyond teaching facts, or requiring memorization, serves to instill values, with teachers serving as mentors. (See Appendix A, “Mann’s Report for 1848” for further information.) The Rabbi in today’s Modern Orthodox Yeshiva is a perfect example of this “unspoken curriculum” with the caveat being that his sense of mission as moral mentor is even more explicit and direct.

The notion of schools as moral development agents led to the Common School movement and its success was an extension of growing beliefs surrounding education. Rather than seeing schools simply as a force to inculcate Protestant values into the students, as well as the traditional curriculum of reading, writing, and math, school was now being recognized as a crucial brick in the foundation of a child’s socialization and cognitive development (Neem, 2016) and maturation (see Appendix A for more information on the history and reforms of the Common School movement and Appendix A for a look at the Post-

Revolutionary War Attitude toward education). School on Sunday for Jewish students could provide an additional day for this critical “socialization and cognitive development” in the framework of religious studies, thus enforcing the proximity and downtime ideas put forth by the Brafmans (Neem, 2016).

Throughout history, the expectation of school is that it cultivates solid citizens and sets the stage for a rise in station. The Yeshiva system has also viewed education as a way of enlightening its constituents and moving them forward and beyond the preceding generation, both in their learning skill and their observance of Torah. By following the educational models set forth by the Common School movement and then Public School movement, and by adding an extra Sunday of learning, Yeshiva high schools are operating on the belief that more schooling is in the best interests of the students.

Public Schools also serve the function of acculturating the population as “Americans”; it instills in immigrants and natives alike a love of the land, country, and ideals of American Democracy (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998). So too, Yeshiva high schools in America were built along the same model instilling an appreciation of America and its values, especially religious freedom, but also a love for the land of Israel and ideals of Judaism, its practices and respect for its leaders-i.e. Rabbis. By including additional Jewish learning on Sunday, the Yeshiva high school allows an additional half a day of opportunity to reinforce these messages.

### **A Day of Reckoning: The Intersection of School and Work and the Fluke of Monday-Friday Education**

Despite the fact that the country viewed school as a net positive, the country went to a Monday-Friday schedule to address child labor. The Progressive Movement sought to curtail

child labor as it exploited children and put them in harm's way, but passing legislation to do so had met with little success. With the advent of the Roosevelt presidency and New Deal policies to promote children's general welfare, it was not anti-child labor policies that removed children from the workplace, but rather the passage of laws mandating children's school attendance (Cohen,2005). The more days and hours a student was in school the less he or she could work and compete with adults for jobs. The five-day school week would keep a teenager safe from the harm of a job and make the teenager unattractive as an employee since full-time work was out of the question.

This decision to normalize the school week around the work week was not grounded in best practices, research, or comprehensive pedagogical analysis. It was done, essentially, to educate, but above all else, to protect children from dangerous working conditions and to protect jobs for adults by eliminating competition with a younger and cheaper child labor force, and it has persisted. Yeshiva schools, which must follow State requirements also have a five-day schedule to mirror Public Schools (To see the role religion played in Sunday and work, see Appendix A, "How Sunday Became a Day Off Too.") It is fair to ask that if the current five-day a week schedule for Public Schools is the product of a historical Black Swan like the collapse of the world economy, should Jewish day schools be utilizing that schedule and building on it to increase Jewish practice and relationships to Rabbis?

The role of Sundays in American culture also has a long history. From the early 1900s there was a movement to move away from any work being done on Saturday or Sunday by anyone in America (See Appendix A). This movement culminated with great success in the 1930s. and went hand in hand with school schedules as school became, in effect, a non-compete apparatus used to remove youth from the job market. It is reasonable

to assume that had the workweek continued to be six days, perhaps schooling would adopt this schedule to free up support working parents' childcare needs and to avoid the competition of child workers. Ultimately the Great Depression is credited as the mother of the two-day weekend since shorter hours were viewed as a way of reducing unemployment (Sopher, 2014).

### **School, Individuality, and Identity**

The political and economic factors that contribute to the historical changes in schooling and school scheduling are discussed in Appendix A. For this research, it is germane to consider that adoption of a five-day school week was the result of politics as opposed to best practices. It is also relevant to appreciate that in the interwar period schools began to play a central role in the social and formative lives of high school students. Students' identities; self-worth; and sense of accomplishment, long under the purview of family and social institutions such as Church and Synagogue, were transferred to the realm of the high school. School was transformed from a place where students learned in order to grow, in order to become productive citizens, to a place where students learned about themselves to become independent, thinking, individuals. (See Appendix A for a look at the emergence and impact of IQ and tracking during this period.) These school-based identities were reflected in the formation of teams, bands, clubs, literary societies, dramatic performances and more (Ryan, 2005). For the first time, school became an arena where students could thrive beyond the classroom, a place where they could "be" as opposed to be a place focused on what they are becoming. School went from a place where students went to become productive members of the community to vibrant communities in and of themselves. If schools are communities, it is safe to assume that to encourage a Yeshiva high school

student to identify as a member of this religious community, you would want that student to be in school as much as possible.

### **Theoretical Rationales for School on Sunday**

Despite multiple changes in schooling, public vs. private, the arrival of chromebooks and new technology, curriculum revisions, the five-day school week has remained constant. Historically, however, single gender male Modern Orthodox Yeshiva day schools in the Metropolitan New York Tri-State area have had some form of alternative scheduling in their effort to highlight and emphasize Judaic studies. This has included the following options which are explored in this study:

A. Six-Day School Week with half a day of Judaic studies on Sunday morning

(approximately every other Sunday with a total of about 20 Sunday School days annually. When this study refers to the six-day school week it is referring to this model of approximately 20 alternating Sundays in the year).

B)-Five Day School Week -Monday-Friday

C) Sunday Friday Swap with a total of five days of school per week but with students off on Friday but attending Judaic studies classes on Sunday (for most of the year).

Certain Public Schools have experimented with alternative scheduling, including four-day and six-day school weeks and have met with varying degrees of success, at least regarding academic outcomes (Hewitt & Denny, 2011). Some 1,607 schools in the 2018-2019 semesters in Oregon followed a four-day a week schedule by removing either a Monday or Friday (Thompson et al, 2021). There was some drop off in student achievement in Math, but no diminishment of achievement in reading (Thompson et al, 2021). One key finding was in the area of absenteeism. Students in grades 9 and 12 had no difference in the



percentage of days missed on compared to students with the five-day school week. Students in grades 10 and 11, however, had a 0.7 and a 1.6 percent increase in absenteeism respectively (Thompson et al, 2021). Tenth grade students with the four-day school week were 5.7 percentage points more likely to be engaged in missed school days, while juniors demonstrated a 10.7 percent increase in absenteeism (Thompson et al, 2021). Keep in mind that with Fridays removed from the calendar each day missed takes on even more significance. It is worth noting that students may feel that having a day off is not a day off unless it is an unsanctioned day off. In other words, if everyone is off, it doesn't really count. Whether due to mental health days or extended vacations, (Thompson et al, 2021) the extra day off can lead to even more missed time. In a Yeshiva setting, with an alternative configuration of no Friday, but school on Sunday, one might expect students to be absent on Sunday to have a "real" day off.

One notable finding of the Oregon study was that students who started in a five-day school week and then switched into a four-day configuration had higher levels of absenteeism post the transfer. This challenges the expectation that when switching into a school with less time demands it should be easier to attend and not miss days (Thompson et al, 2021). This speaks to a larger concern with school on Sunday for Yeshiva students in that implementing a schedule change-for students who did not have school on Sunday in earlier years may actually result in increased days absent. Another study, conducted in Colorado between 1997-2014, explored juvenile crime rates as they related to schools that switched to a four-day, Monday-Thursday schedule (Fischer & Argyle, 2018). The schools that switched to the four-day schedule compared to those that retained the five-day schedule saw a staggering 20% increase in juvenile crime (Fischer & Argyle, 2018). This was most notable

in property defacement. This seems to suggest that when students have more out of school time, they find trouble. For Yeshiva students, whether it is the five-day a week configuration, or the alternative configurations of school on Sunday every other Sunday or no Friday but replacing it with School on Sunday, a richer schedule with more time demands may keep students focused on school and prevent them from finding trouble (Fischer & Argyle, 2018).

A study of recent Turkish immigrants considered a six-day of school configuration for children ages 7-13. In addition to typical Monday-Friday hours, students attended Sunday school from 11:00AM-3:00PM (Isik-Ercan, 2012), the same four-hour equivalent of the Yeshiva schools in this study. The students were in school, in a somewhat informal atmosphere, learning about Muslim law through textual study staffed by young Muslim men and women who served as mentors (Isik-Ercan, 2012). The learning and prayers would happen almost organically and the students reported that the mentors were engaging and positive (Isik-Ercan, 2012). The parents of the students who attended school on Sunday recognized that the cultural and religious atmosphere reinforced their unique background's messaging and values (Isik-Ercan, 2012) in a way that would be similar to the idea of spending time with the Rabbi and other Jewish students on school on Sunday. This study revealed being embedded in the culture had positive outcomes in student relationships to mentors and the overall attitude and practice (via prayer and learning) to the students (Isik-Ercan, 2012). There was also a reported increase in a "sense of belonging" (Isik-Ercan, 2012) of particular students in this study as well as more positive prosocial behavior and a stronger sense of identity (Isik-Ercan, 2012); all outcomes Yeshivas with school on Sunday seek to obtain. Parents of Jewish students who attend school on Sunday relate how the almost

continuous immersion in Jewish culture and learning is one of the key defining features of school on Sunday and makes for a seamless integration of Jewish values not just in school, but to create Jews who identify and practice as Jews later in the real world (Schuster, 2019).

While the study above suggests that being in school for an additional day on Sunday has a positive impact on students' mental health, the students were mostly younger with some high school aged-students included. Additionally, the study was of Sunday school hours beginning at 11:00AM, meaning that students were more likely to sleep late or get a full night's sleep regardless of how late they may have been engaged in social activities on Saturday night. The students in the current study begin school 8:00AM Sunday and some travel as much as an hour. High school students need a great deal of sleep and being groggy or sleep-deprived, can be connected to impaired learning, aggression, and low self-esteem (Marx et al, 2017). Although being in school around the Rabbi from a cultural, practice-oriented, and mentorship perspective may be good, students may resent being there so early and this schedule may actually have negative effects.

The theoretical rationale for school on Sunday (the sixth day of Judaic classes, or, as in example c above Sunday serving as the fifth day) is rooted in tradition and the schools' mission statements that adhere to the idea that a life of Torah study is a full time endeavor. While the swap model of a day off on Friday replaced with Sunday school hours may seem counter to this idea, the school in this study that employs this model has many students who commute a great distance. Since the Sabbath begins quite early during the Winter months, having students travel to school for a short Friday and be able to return to their respective neighborhoods is a logistical issue. The overall message of school on Sunday

is that there is no “day off” from Judaism or Jewish learning; and “they exist...in order to impart a religious lifestyle to the next generation” (Weinstein, 2020, p. 1).

### **Theoretical Model: Path Dependence**

Path Dependence is the idea that once a person, company, organization, country etc. embarks on a “path” it is very difficult to imagine deviating from the path. As summarized by Lawrence D. Brown, path dependence argues, “that choices or events (possibly contingent, but nonetheless critical) at a given point will often shape, constrain, even determine the range of choices “actors” face subsequently” (Brown, 2010, p. 644). Despite the institution of the five-day work week over 100 years ago, and the move away from the largely agricultural and manufacturing occupations of that time, the 9-5, five-day work week remains enshrined as the ideal state in the American workplace and continues to have its hold on American schools. Even with the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, and despite schools experimenting with late starts and hybrid models of Zoom and in-person teaching, the traditional method of school five-days a week is, once again, the norm. Danielle Dreilinger cautions when she argues for a later school start time, that evidence and data do not always matter compared to how people *feel* and the reality on the ground. She explores schools as comprised of after-hours workers, cleanup crews, lunch programs, extracurricular activities, professional development, grading, etc. and essentially an ecosystem that cannot be upended without intense discomfort and even backlash from parents, faculty, and students. (Dreilinger, 2019). In other words, despite some research that suggests that students would do better with a later school day start time, (Dreilinger, 2019) and noted that the adolescent sleep pattern suggests a need for between 8-10 hours of sleep nightly, communities resist this change because the system in place requires an early start

time-no matter what the data might suggest is better for the children (Dreilinger, 2019). Asking parents to start their day later to accommodate the late school start time, would impact the work force, once again, revealing the relationship between education practice and policy and work-place economics. Once embarked on the path of the 5 day school week, it is now so entrenched with other “systems” such as the work week, that change would seem near impossible.

Path dependence suggests similar challenges in a school deciding to expand the school week to include Sunday, or switch to a schedule of no Friday class and Sunday replacement. Parents and students expect and may be accustomed to a certain school schedule, carpools are arranged; weddings and the like are planned around the school calendar and suddenly the school shifts to an alternate schedule? Additionally, part of the allure or cache of a school on Sunday type school is that it is considered more “Yeshivish”, essentially more religious. It wasn’t just about the overall amount of time being learned-this could be accomplished by adding an hour of Torah learning to school each days-but having Jewish learning and school on Sunday: a day off for the secular world, makes a powerful statement. This is where another Theoretical Framework comes into play and culture takes center stage.

### **Cultural Framework**

It is through culture that societies define happiness and outline the most basic path toward acquiring happiness. Rubia R. Valente and Brian J. L. Berry, in their paper on job satisfaction and happiness, view the idea of happiness through a Cultural Framework. They posit that: “Happiness comes from achieving what the culture deems important. Understanding culture, the “collective programming of the mind” that differentiates the

motivations and behavior of members of one society from those of other societies is critical if we are to understand the varying sources of happiness (Hofstede, 1984). It is through culture that societies give meaning to their environments, organizing their life around particular symbols and myths. Culture shapes perceptions and behavior by directing that attention be paid to some details of reality, permitting some actions and forbidding others, rewarding those who achieve what is thought to be desirable (Berry et al. 1997). Central to this programming of the mind is the transmission of values, broad preferences for one state of affairs over others” (Valente and Berry, 2015).

They further note the significance of “the process of childhood socialization, when individuals come to accept that a particular way of life is meaningful” (Valente and Berry, 2015). School on Sunday, the notion that Sunday is a day of immersion in Torah study, and being with the Rabbi, and all the connotations of holiness, religious intellectual vigor, and the giving heart associated with a Rabbinic figure, becomes ingrained in the parents and children and converges with Path Dependence. In other words, “The Rabbi” is seen as the personification of the Torah and the 24/7 idea of a Torah way of life. The message of Sunday School is embodied in the Rabbi—he is a Rabbi *even* on Sunday and therefore Sunday is a day of Torah. A message, perhaps, many students are not getting from their parents. Having an adolescent immerse himself in the aura of the Rabbi is deemed as a main desire of parents. They want the child to watch the Rabbi in action and emulate his commitment to Torah and the Halacha, Jewish Law. Thus, being with the Rabbi on Sunday is another day of the cultural reinforcement of Jewish values embodied by the Rabbi.

Instilled in the identity of these communities, for better or for worse, is the notion that school on Sunday is the norm: a part of the culture. For a young Jewish man to just *be* in

Yeshiva on Sunday, not sleeping late, at prayers, in the presence of a Rabbi, is seen as a net positive even if no specific content or curricula are followed. By definition, when a teenaged boy has school on Sunday he is waking up early and is involved in school prayers and learning for at least half the day. Parents may even use school on Sunday as an excuse for Saturday night curfew. A number of historians have recently investigated “educationalization,” that is why and how Americans turn to schools to address large-scale social problems (Cohen 2005; Gordon 2015; Kantor and Lowe 2006; Labaree 2008; Steffes 2012). School on Sunday is, on some level, the Yeshiva version of “Educationalization.” That is to say, the social problem or fear in the Modern Orthodox world is the concern that students may leave religious life (labeled “Going off the *Derech* – which is Hebrew for Path).” There is considerable concern that today’s Jewish youth will reject the traditions and religion of their parents, forsake observing the Sabbath, and the laws of Kosher food as well as other elements of Jewish life. School on Sunday, for many parents, is one simple answer to this complex and multifaceted issue, the rationale being that school on Sunday cannot hurt and the more days in Yeshiva, with the Rabbis, cannot help but be beneficial.

The idea that schools can play cultural roles is noted in non-Jewish circles as well. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the First Day or school on Sunday Society of Philadelphia constitution preamble declared, “And whereas among the youth of every large city various instances occur of the first day of the week, called Sunday, a day which ought to be devoted to religious improvement, being employed to the worst of purposes, the depravity of morals and manners-it is therefore the opinion of sundry persons that the establishment of First Day or Sunday Schools in this city would be of essential advantage to the rising

generation” (Sanders, 2018, p. 118). Around the same time in Boston, Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner gave a sermon where he described school on Sundays as being both intellectual and moral and that it would prevent “vice and crime” (Sanders, 2018, p. 119). In point of fact, School on Sunday, as has been noted by many a pedagogue or observant parent, has the added benefit of curtailing Saturday night activities.

The five-day school week is, in essence, an arbitrary creation or byproduct of an economic downfall, that just happens to work for the most part, judging by graduation rates. The school on Sunday model, in a similar vein, is also a holdover tradition from a time in Europe (Forta, 1995) when Yeshiva students learned Torah as a “vocation” full time.” While the school on Sunday model is propagated with the best of intentions, using measures such as the JewBALE it is both possible and advisable to consider whether school on Sunday is, in fact, an advantageous model for today’s Modern Orthodox day school student regarding student/Rabbi relationships. The data mined in the JewBALE study takes into account students’ religious practices, mental health, and academic track to examine differences in relationships with Rabbis based on their diverse schedules.

### **Church School on Sunday**

With over 7.6 million people enrolled in Southern Baptist Christian Sunday School, the church sees Sunday School as the most dominant form of religious influence on all of their disciples (David, 2011). Recent studies explored how much of an impact these Christian Sunday Schools wield. To that end, 2500 Christian Sunday School students answered survey questions using the “Spiritual Formation Inventory instrument” (SFI) which calculates the students’ belief in G-d, and “how they think, perceive and act like biblical



disciples” (Waggoner, 2008). The SFI uses seven categories of core values including “learning the truth, obeying God and denying self, sharing faith, serving God and others, exercising biblical faith, building solid relationships, and seeking God (Davis, 2011). Contrary to what was expected, the survey showed that a mere 17% of participants had a “decent discipleship or spiritual formation score” (Davis, 2011). One of the key conclusions was the discovery that the teachers in the ministry of the church needed greater training and pedagogical improvement. This raises the question, As is perhaps the case with Yeshiva school on Sunday teachers/Rabbis, if students are present on Sunday in Yeshiva schools, but the teacher/Rabbi is ineffective in creating fertile soil for religious growth, will an additional day with the student lead to the outcomes one would hope to see? Studies of pre-teens who attended Christian Sunday Schools found only a slight connection between Sunday School teachers and their charges (Fredericks, 2019). In other words, those extra Sundays may have little or no impact on the spirituality of those who attend Sunday School (Davis, 2011). Furthermore, studies have concluded that the greatest predictors of spirituality are based on a child’s parent as a role model (Fredericks, 2019), indicating the more time a child sees a parent in action the better. Therefore, they should spend Sunday with family as opposed to the teacher/Rabbi as least as regards to promoting spirituality. In fact, spending an additional day with a Rabbi who is not adept at teaching, could actually build resentment in a student who traveled to school on what, in the common parlance, would be “a day off.”

In contradistinction to the bleak outcome described above, those who attended Christian Sunday Schools showed higher levels of commitment to prayer, repentance,

worship, and examen of conscience (Davis, 2011) indicating that an additional day spent in Sunday School was well spent as it pertained to those categories.

Having taken a look at the history and development of the five-day school week and its development vis-à-vis the five-day work week, attention is now turned to the hypothesis with a focus on how this, somewhat arbitrary and aftereffect of history, the current school system of M-F, impacts the relationship of Yeshiva students to their rebbeim based on this and alternative timeframes.

### **Chapter 3: Research Questions/Hypotheses**

The current research will explore students' responses on the JewBALE scale of religious practice and beliefs in three all-boys high schools. Each school has a different configuration of schedules for school on Sunday. School E has school on Sunday every other Sunday. School N has school on Sunday, every Sunday, but they do not have school on Friday. Lastly, school U has school Monday through Friday with no Sunday school. Note that all three schools are similar in many ways in that they are religious Zionist, all-boys Yeshivas with rigorous dual curricula committed to academic excellence. The families of the students in these schools are very similar, with the majority being Ashkenazi (90% plus), Sabbath observant and Kosher observant. Additionally, they all pray in Orthodox synagogues. The student bodies in which these three schools pool are all very similar and it is not uncommon for a student at one of these Yeshivas to have expressed interest or even applied to one of the other Yeshivas. The research will evaluate differences in the success of the schools in terms of the results of the positive relationships with rabbis controlling track; the overall healthy mental health outlooks of the individual student bodies; and their ability in participating in the religious practices of Yarmulke wearing and putting on Phylacteries. It is the goal of this research to determine if the different attitudes towards Rabbis can be accounted for, in some part, due to their diverse weekly schedules.

The current research is a secondary analysis of the JewBALE 2.0 data and will use a regression analysis to answer our research question. It will consider how the following variables play into alternative schedule configurations: academic tracks, scores on the Duke Profile (Parkerson et al, 1990), Judaic Studies GPA, and General Studies GPA, and impact

student outcomes on Positive Relationships with rebbeim, mental health, and Religious Practices. It will look at the following hypothesis outlined below:

Once a baseline of comparison is controlled for between the three schools, we will determine the following:

Research question: Is there a difference in the level of closeness between the student and Rabbi at the different schools while controlling for mental health, academic track, and religious practices (as defined by the wearing of Phylacteries and Yarmulkes)?

Hypothesis: The sixth day of school, occurring every other week, should increase the closeness between the student and Rabbi.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

The current research was a secondary analysis of data collected previously. For that data collection, students responded to the JewBALE 2.0 scale (Goldberg, 2016), an anonymous measure developed to determine Orthodox Jewish high school students' levels of religious practices and beliefs, using Survey Monkey. Considering the extremely personal and sensitive nature of the questions about belief in G-d and relationships with family it was important to ensure that students felt their confidentiality and anonymity was protected and this also allowed for them to be honest in their answers. Thirty-one American modern Orthodox Yeshivas were asked to participate in this study with the goal of having a minimum of 50 students complete the scale at each setting (Goldberg, 2016). Over the course of December 2016 and January 2017, emails were sent to principals of the 31 schools asking for their participation in exchange for which each school was offered a school-specific report of their students' responses (as group data, maintaining anonymity) as well as some of the overall data (Goldberg, 2016). Parents were informed of the schools' participation and were given the opportunity to opt out of their child participating (Goldberg, 2016).

Due to the nature of each schools' unique culture, some participating schools offered the scale to their entire population while others designated classes to participate (Goldberg, 2016). Some schools allowed for the scale to be taken during class time and others stipulated that it be done on students' own time (Goldberg, 2016). Some schools offered incentives, allowing completion of the scale to count toward students' community service requirements.

At the end of the data-collection period, 1341 high school students completed the scale from 18 of the 31 schools contacted (Goldberg, 2016). This exceeded the power necessary for the statistical analyses for this study.

### **Participants**

Out of the 1341 respondents, 39% were male, 58% were female, and 3% reporting as other. For purposes of this study, only students who attended one of three all boys schools will be included. Overall, there were 134 students who attended one of three all boys schools. Most (99%) stated that they are male and the remaining 1% stated “other”. The majority of the students came from 9<sup>th</sup> grade (61%) with nearly equal amounts from the other three grades (10<sup>th</sup> grade 11%, 11<sup>th</sup> grade 13% and 12<sup>th</sup> grade 14%). Nine in ten are Ashkenazi, 7% are Sefardi and 3% have mixed backgrounds. Almost all (99%) say their family davens in an Orthodox shul and everyone comes from a Sabbath observant and kosher home.

### **Measures**

This study used a revised edition of the previous JewBALE scale used in research conducted by Goldberg (2016). Also administered was the Duke Health Profile (Parkerson et al, 1990) and a Socio-Religious Scale of Personal Beliefs (Goldberg, 2016). The JewBALE scale totals 167 questions: 33 on belief, 50 on actions, 40 on demographic information, and 27 on personal beliefs (Goldberg, 2016). There are 17 items in the Duke Health Profile (Parkerson et al, 1990).

The scale started with students acknowledging their consent to be a part of the study and then they started to answer questions on the categories listed above with additional, specific, sub-categories. As described by Weinstein, (2020, 42-44) they are broken down as follows:

**JewBALE 2.0 Breakdown (Goldberg, 2020):**

Scale	Subscale
1. A. Total Beliefs	Divine Providence with Relation to the World
	Divine Providence with Relation to the Individual
	Fear/Love/Awe of God
	Joyful/Meaningful Life
	Rabbinic Authority
	Divinity/Truth of Torah
	Relationship to Israel
	Outlook on Secular Studies
	B. Total Actions
Prayer	
Blessings	
Formal Prayer	
Informal Prayer	
Holiday Observance	
Interpersonal Relations/Personal Character Traits	
Kashrut	
Study of Torah	
Modesty	
Sabbath Observance	
2. Demographics	
	Family: background, relationships

	School: relationship with teachers, connection to learning, grades, tracking
	Self-concept
	Technology: use of, bullying
3. Socio-Religious Scale of Personal Beliefs	Aspiration to be a Jewish communal leader
	Future Plan
	Women
	Sexuality and Family Values
	Western Values
	Judgment
	Social Media
	Influences
	Growth Mindset
4. Duke Health Profile	Physical Health
	Mental Health
	Social Health
	Perceived Health
	Disability
	Growth Mindset

The majority of the questions were 7- point likert-style with the participant choosing on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7(completely agree) (Goldberg, 2020).



One of the key additions to the JewBALE 2.0 from the JewBALE 1.0 administration was the inclusion of the Duke Health Profile as this allowed the potential to track a relationship between students' mental health and numerous facets of belief and practice (Weinstein, 2020). The 17-question scale gives an overall health score. Mental health in this study will be defined by the results on the 5 questions measuring mental health.

**Positive Relationships with Rebbeim** is defined as having a strong connection with the rebbe and will be based on the compilation of data from the answers to questions: 6, 42, and 43C. Please see below for a sample questions.

Question 6. Students were asked to mark Completely disagree, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Ambivalent, Agree, Strongly agree, or Completely agree with the following statements:

-It is important to find a Rabbi (or group of Rabbis) that will serve as my posek (a person who decides halakha for me).

-I respect the process that Rabbis engage in to decide halakha for their community.

-A Rabbi should be consulted when you have important life decisions to make.

-I decide which religious practices to follow based on what makes sense to me.

**Religious Practice** will be based on responses to questions: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 58, 63A and 63F. Please see below for a sample questions.

Question 10. Students were asked to mark Completely disagree, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Ambivalent, Agree, Strongly agree, or Completely agree with the following statements:

-I perform community service activities even when not required.

-I give charity.

**Judaic Studies GPA and Tracking is defined by the students self-reporting their GPA in Judaic Studies and which track they are in (honors or standard) and** will be measured based on the data from question 40, 48, and 49. Please see below for a sample questions.

Question 40. Students were asked to mark I really enjoy my classes, I like my classes, I am ambivalent about my classes, I don't like my classes, or I really hate my classes based on the following prompt:

Which of the following best describes your feelings about Judaic Studies classes.

**General Studies GPA and Tracking is defined by the students self-reporting their GPA in General Studies as well as which track (honors or not) they are in and** will be measured based on the data from question 41, 50, and 51. Please see below for a sample questions.

Question 41. Students were asked to mark I really enjoy my classes, I like my classes, I am ambivalent about my classes, I don't like my classes, or I really hate my classes based on the following prompt:

Which of the following best describes your feelings about General/Secular Studies classes.

Wearing a kippah and tefillin will be based on questions from the JewBALE that ask about the frequency of wearing a kippah and tefillin.

### **Data Analysis**

The responses will be analyzed to determine whether there are differences between how students view their relationships towards their rebbes taking into account the Sunday

configuration of the school; the academic track of the students; their mental health; and religious practices.

In order to analyze the research question a one-way-ANCOVA was conducted to determine whether there are differences in the level of closeness between the student and Rabbi at the different schools while controlling for mental health, social health, physical health and tracking and grades for Judaic studies classes. Further analyses were conducted to determine whether the type of school predicts the level of closeness to the Rabbi while controlling for mental health, social health, Judaic grades and Judaic honors track.

## Chapter 5: Results

In order to determine the similarity of the three schools, multiple one-way ANOVAs were conducted. The dependent variables were social and emotional health as measured by the Duke Health Profile, religious practices as measured by the “actions” subscale of the JewBALE, and academia as measured by tracking and self-reported GPAs. The dependent variable was the type of school E, N, or U.

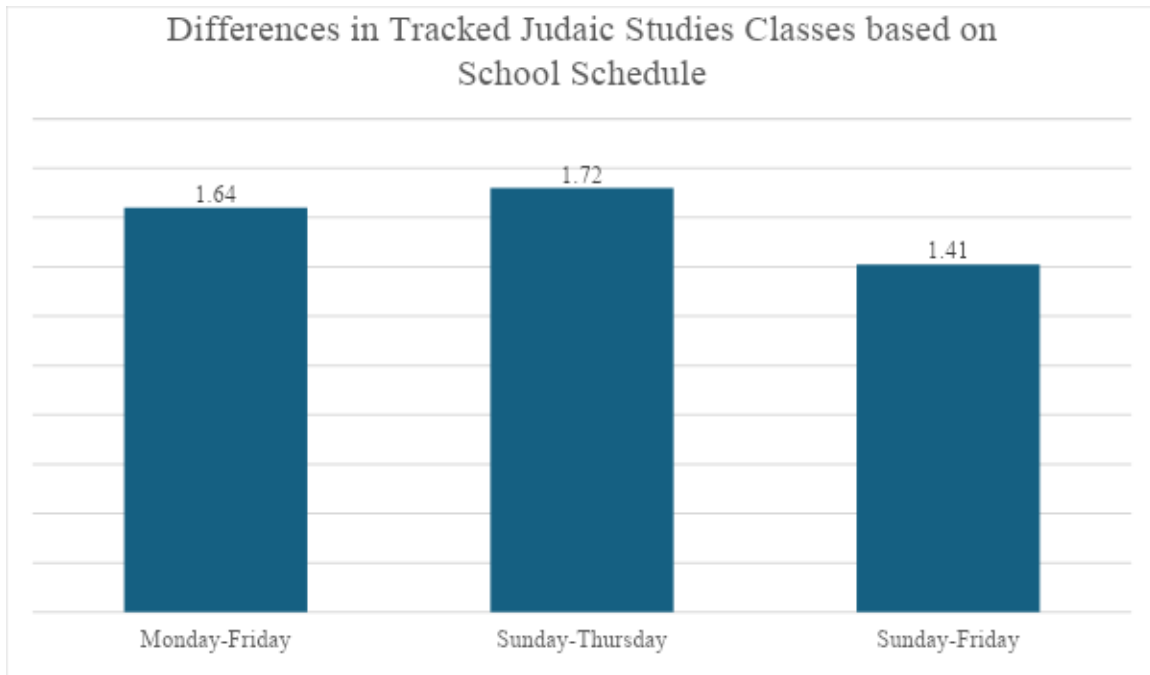
There were no differences in the mental health of students and whether or not they wear phylacteries as evidenced by the *t* test. One may surmise that wearing phylacteries, a very ritualized part of Jewish observance, would be something a student with mental health issues would either fully embrace or eschew depending on the type of issues he was confronted with. For example, a student with OCD might cling to the ritual of the daily putting on and off of the straps while a student with severe ADHD might feel constrained by the same straps. One might also suspect that students with mental health issues may wish to be closer to a Rabbi figure—a stable person in their otherwise perhaps topsy-turvy life. That did not prove to be the case here. Since wearing tefillin is a daily ritual, it may be so habitual that it is not easily impacted by mental health challenges or changes.

There were no differences between the schools on social or mental health, religious practices or secular studies grades. However, there were differences between the schools on Judaic studies grades,  $F(2,129) = 6.48, p < .01$  and tracking honors in Judaic,  $F(2,129) = 4.99, p < .01$  and secular studies  $F(2,129) = 8.96, p < .001$ .

LSD Post hoc tests were conducted to determine where the differences lie. School E had fewer students in both Judaic and secular honors than school N or U. School U had self-reported higher Judaic studies grades than schools E or N. Below is a chart that depicts the

differences. Tracked Judaic and secular honors is measured on a 1-2 scale where 1 = honors and 2=non-honors and GPA was measured on a scale from 1 mostly Fs to 5 mostly As.

**Figure 1** *Differences in Tracked Judaic Studies Honors, Depending on the Type of School*

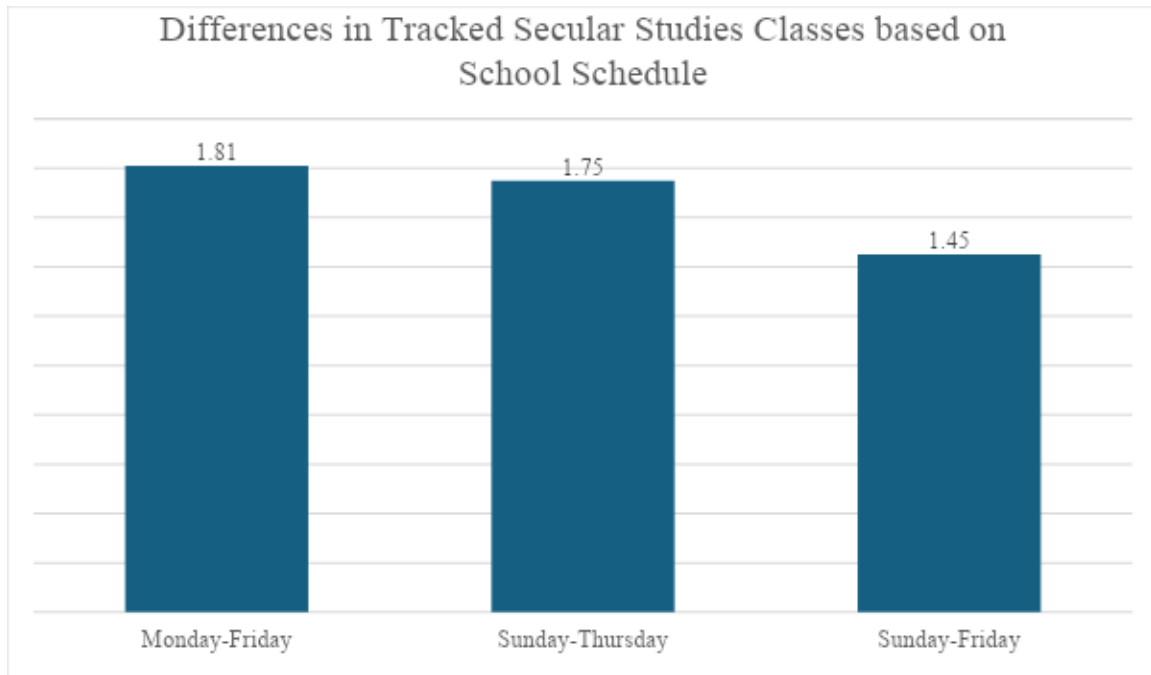


-Monday-Friday: School U

Sunday-Thursday: School N

Sunday-Friday: School E

**Figure 2** *Differences in Tracked Secular Studies Honors, Depending on the Type of School*

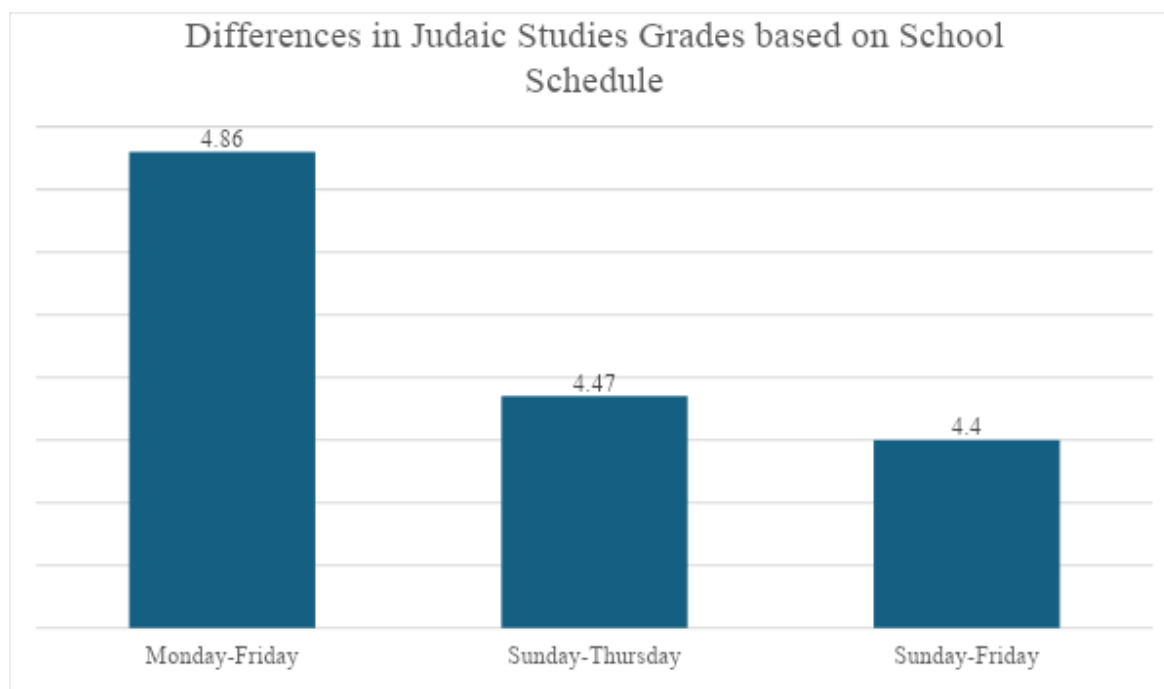


-Monday-Friday: School U

Sunday-Thursday: School N

Sunday-Friday: School E

**Figure 3** Differences in Judaic Studies Grades, Depending on the Type of School



Monday-Friday: School U

Sunday-Thursday: School N

Sunday-Friday: School E

Research question: Is there a difference in the level of closeness between the student and Rabbi at the different schools while controlling for mental health, social health, physical health and tracking and grades for Judaic studies classes.

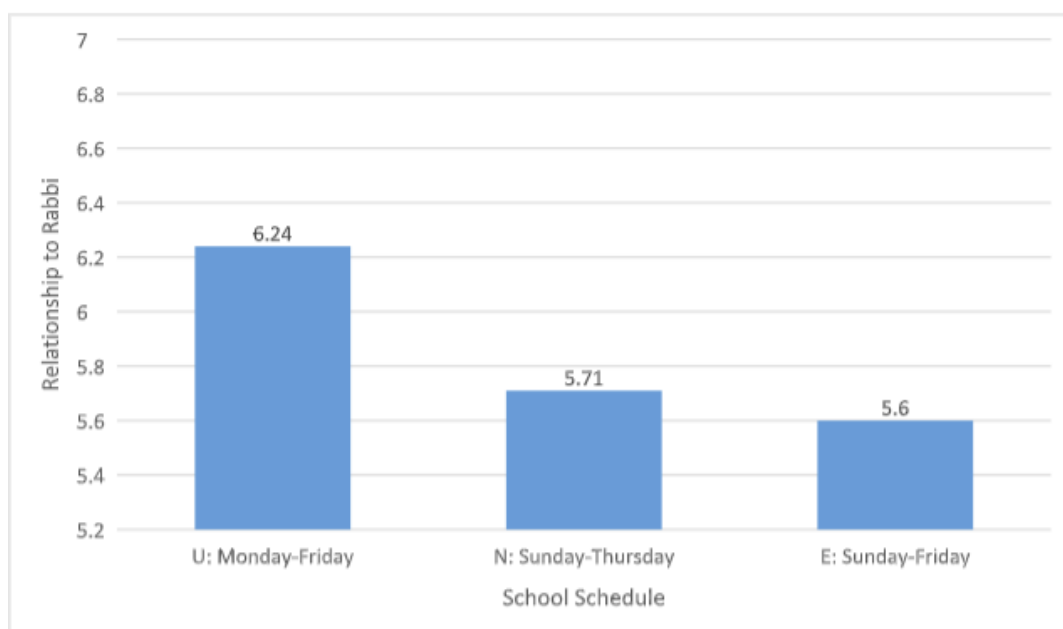
A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in school type on the closeness of the student and rebbe while controlling for mental health, physical health, social health, academic grades in Judaic studies and tracking in Judaic studies.

Overall, the model was significant,  $F(2,114)=3.23$ ,  $p<.05$  such that there was a difference between school type and the relationship with the rebbe while controlling for

the above mentioned variables. Post-hoc tests were conducted to determine where the difference lies. School U had the highest scores on the Relationship with their rebbe, (M=6.24, SD=.90) compared to school E (M=5.60, SD=1.39) and school N (M=5.711, SD=1.22).

**Figure 4**

*Relationship to Rabbi for Different School Schedule*



Relationship to Rabbi for Different School Schedule

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine whether type of school predicts the level of closeness to the Rabbi while controlling for mental health, social health, physical health, Judaic grades and Judaic honors track. In the first step of the model, mental health, physical health, social health, Judaic grades and Judaic honors track were entered. The predictor, type of school, was entered in the second step. The dependent variable was the relationship with the Rabbi. Overall, the model was



significant,  $R^2\Delta = .04$ ,  $F(1,115)=6.29$ ,  $p<.05$ , such that School U, which follows a more traditional M-F schedule, has slightly better relationships between students and rebbeim than School N which has the S-Th schedule and School E which has additional school every other Sunday.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

### **Relationship to Rabbi Based on Track**

The data suggested that there is no significant differences in how the students view their Rabbis based on the track they are in, nor is there any difference per school by track.

### **Rabbi Relationship to School Schedule**

After reviewing the data from the JewBALE 2.0 study, students from school U who spent less time with their Rabbis in the traditional M-F schedule configuration reported feeling closer to their Rabbis as opposed to the students who had the additional S-F configuration as in school E or the non-traditional S-Th schedule of school N. This seems to suggest that the more traditional M-F schedule is a factor worth exploring in terms of it being the setting that reported the most closeness between students and Rabbis. The hypothesis set forth in this study, that “The sixth day of school, occurring every other week, should increase the closeness between the student and Rabbi,” was not supported.

School U had the highest scores on the relationship with their rebbe, ( $M=6.24$ ,  $SD=.90$ ) compared to school E ( $M=5.60$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ) and school N ( $M=5.711$ ,  $SD=1.22$ ). One of the findings of this study is that the school with the more traditional schedule (and fewer days than School N) had a better overall positive relationship outcome than schools with non-traditional schedules with the Rabbis. Another surprising outcome was that school E, while actually having more Rabbi time in terms of days with their students than school N, still scored higher on the rebbe Relationship scale than school N which met, overall, less frequently than school E albeit on the S-Th schedule. The findings seem to suggest that a regular M-F schedule relates to better outcomes in terms of relationships with the

Rabbis. This raises questions about assuming that time with the Rabbi even if it is outside of the normative M-F schedule is a net positive, and requires significant additional exploration.

While it is tempting to generate explanations for these factors, it is critical to consider the myriad factors that contribute to the rabbi-student relationship and the possibility that additional, unmeasured factors were at play. To be fair, the relationships closeness could have been impacted by the school's/administration's philosophy (or lack thereof) of actively promoting this closeness. Perhaps schools are not properly matching up the rebbe's personality with the right type of student. Additionally, it is unclear just how good these rebbeim are in creating this closeness; they may be excellent teachers of Torah content, but not great or well-trained on how to foster personal relationships with students. Also, there might be a ceiling effect in that a student might have achieved peak-closeness with his Rebbe and having another few hours on a Sunday for instance can't increase what is already a close-knit relationship. Tracking attendance issues on Sunday would also be worth looking into. After all, if attendance is disproportionately down on Sundays, this would not only not allow rebbeim to craft relationships with students who aren't there since, they aren't there, but it might need to resentment for those students who *did* show up who may have a sense of "What am I doing here if *no one* is here?" attitude.

### **Things to Note for Schools Regarding Sunday School**

This study raises the question of whether students need less days with their Rabbis or need to see them just on a traditional schedule. It seems that students might need a "break" from the Rabbi and it would be important to explore if the S-F schedule of school E leads to oversaturation or even resentment of too much school/Rabbi time. While school N has just as much Rabbi/student interface time as school U which scored the highest for Rabbi/student

relationships, school U follows a traditional, or secular schedule of the classic M-F workweek. In other words, this schedule is in some sense normalized and has some level of inherent student buy-in-even with the additional hours added per day due to the dual-curriculum. School N, on the other hand, is on a schedule where, while Fridays are off, might sound good, to those students, they might resent their Rabbis on a Sunday schedule when the rest of the world is otherwise playing soccer, having family time, or watching the National Football League. For students who have never had this schedule before, as they are coming from feeder schools with either a S-F or M-F schedule, being off on Friday but in school on Sunday may feel “abnormal.” That School E, which meets more than School N has a higher level of positive Rabbi/student relationships may support this hypothesis

The data in the current study underscores the importance of better understanding contributors to student-teacher relationships, consistent with the findings of, Farhah and Cui (2021) who stressed the relationship with student motivation toward learning. Today’s students may need to feel close to their teachers, but how that closeness is accomplished may not be simple, nor a function of time spent. Ori and Rom Brafman revealed in their book, *Click* (2010) consider how the “proximity response” can work against building closeness between the constituents of a school. Relationships are complex, determined and influenced by multiple factors and occur in the context of larger systems and cultures. Further research on school schedules and these other potentially contributing factors to student-teacher relationships is clearly necessary.

### **Some Sunday Considerations for the Field**

As noted earlier in the discussion of the cultural framework, schools may benefit from the Sunday schedule, no matter its specific iteration. Indeed, having Sunday as part of the

school's framework, be it S-F or even S-Th may offer a certain spiritual gravitas and makes it more culturally "yeshivish." Schools may opt to do so, even without other specific benefits. Schools may also benefit from the Sunday focus on Judaic learning in terms of overall reputation and standing in the community, as well as attractiveness to donors. Parents may have chosen that school because of the Sunday requirement and it helps them establish curfews and limitations on Saturday night activities, "because there's school tomorrow."

### **The Commuter Effect**

School on Sunday is not equal for all students. A student who is in school from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. on a Sunday who lives down the block from the school has a little more than four hours of Sunday dedicated to school in terms of school and the commute. A student who lives an hour away from school, however, starts his Sunday commute as early as 6:30 a.m. and may not return home until 1:30 p.m. If possible, in future studies, it would be worth exploring the role this plays in attitudes and approaches to Sunday schedules, as well as its impact on outcomes such as Rabbi-student relationship.

### **Post-COVID-19 and Sunday**

It is also worth noting that this research was conducted with a pre-Covid sample, and it would be worthwhile to see how attitudes and outcomes regarding Sunday school have changed. The pandemic kept entire families together at home and masked in public, and school was held on Zoom. A student who spent a year or two on Zoom might appreciate being in-person in school more than when the JewBALE results described above were collected. Between Zoom, hybrid learning models, and numerous school disruptions, these students are more primed to embrace schedule disruptions and may not resent (and might even welcome) more time in a school environment, especially with their Rabbi. Conversely,

they may be more eager to have Sundays out of school to take part in social or recreational activities with friends and family.

### **Preparation of Rabbis Who Teach on Sundays**

It would be worth exploring what “training” Rabbis in schools with Sunday have in terms of teaching on Sunday as it is a unique experience. Are they acknowledging and empathizing with the students the potential disappointment the students may feel at being in school on Sunday? Are they reinforcing the messaging of the school that being a religious Jew is a 24/7 occupation or are they themselves complaining about being in school on Sunday when they have their own obligations? Further, are they using the time with students in an engaging, productive and perhaps unique way? If Rabbis are not specifically prepared to address Sunday school and its unique cultural context, the increase of positive relations between Rabbis and students seems unlikely to occur. If relationships are to be maintained, enhanced, and fostered on Sunday, it may depend in large part on the training of the Rabbis, or school’s creative programming.

Before venturing into the limitations of the study, there are some additional interesting findings to note regarding the controlling variables as seen below.

### **Phylacteries and Religious Practices**

The data indicates that there is a connection based on wearing phylacteries daily and having a good relationship with the rebbe. Across all three schools, wearing phylacteries correlated with having a good relationship with the Rabbi. Although this correlation held across all three schools, it is of note that due to the small sample size, it was impossible to determine if this correlation favored one school over another. Eighty-five percent of those

who wear phylacteries at least "strongly agree" that they have a strong relationship with their Rabbi versus 72% of those who do not wear phylacteries

### **Mental Health and Phylacteries**

There were no differences in the mental health of students and whether or not they wear phylacteries as evidenced by the t test. Since wearing tefillin is a daily ritual, it may be so habitual that it is not easily impacted by mental health challenges or changes.

### **Limitations**

The small sample size of the populations studied is a major limitation of the current study and as a result, the data and findings are more prone to skewing due to outliers. Additionally, only looking at one school for each schedule type precludes generalizability and broad conclusions. As a secondary analysis of existing data, the study was limited as to the factors it could explore. Omitting a detailed exploration of the nature, training and background of the Rabbis teaching in each school, as well as other school sociocultural and religious factors limit the generalizability of the study's findings and recommendations to the field.

A further limitation is that students who participated in the JewBALE 2.0 study were a self-selecting group. One could argue that the students who participated in the study are a unique subset of the school to begin with. To take the time to fill out all the questions in a candid and thoughtful manner, is to perhaps isolate a more conscientious group of students.

Another limitation of the study is that the data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As indicated above, it may be that in the pre-pandemic world being in school was seen as a negative, whereas after enforced isolation, students may have a greater appreciation for in-person school and might welcome making up for lost time.

It might also be worth gathering more data on the breakdown between relationships between Rabbis and students and the impact of Sunday school based on grade. A limitation of this study is that the data is not segregated based on grade, so the relationship between how particular students of a particular grade relate to their Rabbis cannot be determined. One might suggest that for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, who are perhaps more likely to be home anyway on a Saturday night, (Felson & Gottfredson, 1984) that they are not as impacted by the fact that Saturday night is a “school night.” Juniors and Seniors, many of whom become licensed drivers during the course of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, are more likely to want to go out Saturday night with their extended groups of friends. (Felson & Gottfredson, 1984) For them to have to forego going out Saturday night to spend time with their friends because their parents are making sure they have time to spend with their Rabbis on Sunday is the type of situation that builds resentment and could lead to the students truly not wanting to go to school on Sunday. Further research is needed in this area.

### **Suggestions for Sunday**

That being said, while data needs to be gathered to determine if some of the following suggestions for improving Sunday relationships with rebbeim can truly work, some ideas are presented in the spirit of humility and enhancing building the kesher. If schools feel that Sunday school is still a necessity, below are some suggestions on how to mitigate the challenges.

With the Sabbath starting in the Winter months as early as 4:00PM on a Friday, dismissing at noon to create a Monday-Friday schedule-thereby nixing the Sunday-Thursday model-is deemed by too many as “cutting it too close” in the case of traffic. To that end, maybe those students, the number could be large or small, could have separate learning in their local



communities with a school Rabbi who learns with them in their neighborhood while the rest of the school attends the actual location. Zoom is an option for those students as well, though many Rabbis and students would object about having a hybrid model of a few students on Zoom with most of the class in person. The in-person neighborhood model would also have to take into account that their learning would most likely be unable to match the curriculum being taught in the school. Those few students not going to the actual school would probably be from different grades, let alone different tracks and one Rabbi would not be able to cover all the material covered in those classes.

To combat this reality, Fridays could become “Masterclass” style teaching seminars, where the Rabbis teach broad subjects such as “The Big Questions,” or focus on the Torah Portion of the Week, or “Great Israeli Leaders and Jewish Thinkers of the 20th Century,” In other words, a curriculum that could be taught at every grade level to diverse groups of students who may otherwise be in the distant neighborhoods. This model presents certain issues, however, such as the creation of such a curriculum as well as the training needed for it to be implemented effectively. The larger issue this would present would be a mentality questioning why students should be going to school in the first place for what might be perceived as off the menu, or extraneous information. In other words, while the lessons may be important, it has an unofficial feel, and, if it’s not on the test, many students (and parents would not take it seriously. The counterpoint to that could be that part of all Friday “Masterclass” sessions could be tested and be part of a separate course grade or built into the overall grade of a standard subject such as Talmud or Jewish Law. This might build resentment as well and feel to the teenaged heart, punitive thus resulting in students being in school on Friday (and not Sunday) but feeling resentful to their Rabbis nonetheless.

With the Sabbath starting in the Winter months as early as 4:00PM on a Friday, letting school out at noon to create a Monday-Friday schedule-thereby nixing the Sunday-Thursday model-is deemed by too many as “cutting it too close” in the case of traffic. Maybe those students, the number could be large or small, could have separate learning in their local communities with a school Rabbi who learns with them in their neighborhood while the rest of the school goes to the actual location. Zoom an option for those students as well, though many Rabbis and students would object about having a hybrid model of a few students on Zoom with most of the class in person. The in-person neighborhood model would also have to take into account that their learning would most likely be unable to match the curriculum being taught in the school. Those few students not going to the actual school would probably be from different grades, let alone different tracks and one Rabbi would not be able to cover all the material covered in those classes.

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separate course grade or built into the overall grade of a standard subject such as Talmud or Jewish Law. This might build resentment as well and feel to the teenaged heart, punitive thus resulting in students being in school on Friday (and not Sunday) but feeling resentful to their Rabbis nonetheless.

At the very least, it would be worthwhile for schools to at least determine just how many students would risk returning to their neighborhoods in time for the Sabbath if the school actually had Friday School and did away with Sunday School to follow the schedule from School U or other similarly configured mainstream school models. The Path Dependence Framework seems to imply that any school following the S-T schedule because they always have would continue to do so. It is possible no students live more than an hour and half away to any given school in that situation, and it is logical to think that very few parents would want their sons' commuting over three hours total a day when there are many other school options available which there are in all the neighborhoods surrounding such a school.. Therefore, another option for schools in the S-F configuration could be to end on Friday earlier, at 11:00AM or 11:30AM, thereby building in more time for the commute. A counterpoint to this suggestion, however, could be that many students and even parents might feel that going to school, at a possible commute of three hours travel time isn't worth it for what would be about two to two and a half hours of learning on a Friday where prayers and breakfast would prevent learning from beginning until about 9:00AM. Perhaps a better suggestion is to just have those handful of kids leave 15-20 minutes early, the sweet spot between being there enough to make it worthwhile, and building in another few minutes to leave early to beat the traffic. Obviously they would have to make up the work missed but it

seems negligible in terms of what is being covered the last 15-20 minutes of the end of the school week.

Another suggestion would be to cancel Friday (or go to Zoom) on Fridays for about 8 weeks on the year when the Sabbath, from November-December, basically begins around 4:10PM. This may result in students being very pleased and really being excited to see their Rabbis on Monday after a long weekend, but again, would School N risk deviating from their path in the hope it would approve Rabbi/Relationships? It seems unlikely they would take this risk as Path Dependence Framework implies that organizations and people are generally risk adverse. Indeed, one could imagine people complaining and asking for tuition refunds from all the extra days off.

The above suggestions would also go against the Cultural Framework. To be School N, which competes with School U and School E, and to be a school that either has no school on Friday for around eight weeks on the year, and/or Zooms, is to lose ground to that competition where the other schools do not have to make such compromises. Additionally, for School N and for that matter School E to admit to their parent bodies that the children in their schools would actually have better relationships with their Rabbis if they saw them on different days would be a tough thing to admit to their respective communities. The culture in place is that more days with the Rabbis is better. To suggest that that isn't the case, would probably be taken by the parents as an indictment of the Rabbis on staff.

### **Implications for the Field**

The study results indicate that for the limited number of schools, schedules, and students studied, additional days in school with their Rabbis was not sufficient to improve the overall closeness between students and Rabbis. Rather than recommend any specific

schedule for schools, however, I believe this finding underscores the complexity of the issue and that school schedule is only one small component in building critical student-rabbi relationships. In addition, in determining the school schedule, there are many factors to consider other than just fostering the Rabbi-student relationship.

What this study does suggest, however, is that schools should not make assumptions about scheduling and should intentionally and creatively consider scheduling options and impacts. For example, instead of a Sunday learning model, perhaps schools might shift into non-teaching opportunities for Sunday. Using a “masterclass” model would allow experiential opportunities for the students to engage with their Rabbis, such as spiritual singing events, field trips, and other extracurricular-style events.

It is worth noting that in Israel (due to the fact that the government and society there are sensitive toward Sabbath observers) Friday is traditionally the travel day or day off for most people. Sunday is a regular work/school day in Israel. What makes this situation an outlier is that there is no Sunday School resentment because the whole society feels it-fish do not know they are in water until they experience dry land-so to speak. In that sense, the fomo (fear of missing out) effect that students in America may be experiencing is not in play in Israel and speaks to the notion that alternative schedules, if they are the norm in another culture, normalize things for everyone.

The findings of this study and the literature reviewed suggest understanding the consumer is critical. Schools should learn about their student and parent body. How many students have parents who both work and how precious Sunday is to the family. Schools can explore the alternative activities there are for students when they are not in school on Sunday. If students engage in productive activities on Sundays such as praying, visiting a

grandparent, volunteering at synagogue, or studying, maybe all involved would endorse a non-Sunday option. Schools will also need to understand whether school schedule is a marketable factor for parents.

In response to a sense that Sunday school may be a burden on students, many schools have responded by slowly shaving off Sunday school days. School E in the current study had school every Sunday when in 1997 and now only every-other Sunday schedule. One could be a Sunday school in name and in practice, without suffering the collateral damage of actually making school on Sundays a major point of friction between the school, the parents, and the students.

One question this study raises but does not answer is whether students in Yeshiva high schools see themselves as members of elite prep schools that happen to have a dual curriculum, or do they see themselves as Yeshiva students, engrossed in Torah, who happen to also plan to go to college and earn advanced degrees? Does how one feels about Sunday School, in essence, become an identity marker or a litmus test for one's approach to Jewish Education?

The impact of professional sports on Sunday School attitude is also something worth exploring. From September until the Super Bowl, Sunday is consumed by many Yeshiva students, just as in the general culture, with NFL Football. With special streaming services, students can watch in real time updates and clips from nearly every single game and could watch three-four games straight from 1:00PM (even earlier when they have special games occasionally that start as early as 10:30AM) until the last game ends Sunday night usually after 11:00PM. Couple this love of football with the possibility that some students are "gambling" on these games in the form of Fantasy Leagues, not to mention actual gambling

via Draft Kings, MGM Bets, etc. in some cases with parental assistance, and the games have a financial significance as well. It would be worth exploring if students feel differently toward Sunday School in the latter half of the year when football isn't a factor? Sunday is a crowded space, not just with soccer leagues, music lessons, and family obligations, but with the entertainment content that a phenomenon like football brings to the table. Couple that with social media and the students in school can see in real time on their phones being used in-between classes on all the fun they are missing out on that the world at large, not to mention their friends in M-F school settings are enjoying. The real world encroaches on Sunday School in a way it didn't do a generation ago and FOMO (fear of missing out) is a real issue.

## **Conclusions**

The Sunday of today is not the Sunday of a generation ago. The social and cultural forces at work have created an environment where students see their parents for fewer hours per week than in generations past and where there is more to do on a Sunday than ever before. Whether it is going shopping, watching the game, visiting grandparents, participating in a local STEM program or playing in a sports league, Sunday has morphed into a family day. When Sunday school is thrown into the mix, whether it is on the Sunday-Thursday schedule or the every other Sunday-Friday schedule, students may not reap the desired benefits. Schools need to be as deliberate, strategic and creative in their consideration of scheduling as they are in all elements of the educational endeavor, especially those assumed to build the critical Rabbi-student relationship. This research suggests that Sunday School is not a major factor in fostering positive relationships between Rabbis and students and that further study into the complex factors that drive the relationship is critical.

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## **Appendix A**

### **All School History Related Information**

#### **History of the Early Schools and the Integration Church Values**

Common Schools were perceived as bastions of Protestantism (Groen, 2008) and it took the efforts of educational reformers, like Horace Mann, to move from the Common School to the Public School proper (Mondale & Patton, 2011). It was thanks to reformers and the changing demographics of the country that education in this era was moved from the Church organizational structure to the public schools as we know it today (Mondale & Patton, 2001; Sanders, 2018). Prior to this, education in America was largely made up of “Common Schools” which were more often than not, extensions of the Church. Few notable exceptions stood out, such as in Virginia where, since 1785, a man by the name of William Elliott crafted a school on Sunday at his residence even though it had no overt religious connotations. William Elliott set up a non-religious Sunday school in his home in 1785 (Sanders, 2018). Also, in 1786, Thomas Crenshaw operating out of Hanover County, Virginia established a school very similar in content and conduct as that enshrined by Elliott (Sanders, 2018). These schools were essentially rogue, running without being under the aegis of the church and as such the quality of study was not very rigorous since the population was non-religious. Any education they had was seen as non-essential and “extra” as opposed to the Church schools that were looking to create literate, Bible reading congregants (Sanders, 2018). In the decades of the 1820s and 1830s, these somewhat independent schools were becoming increasingly rare since the Church was consolidating its control of the school system (Sanders, 2018). Mann, one of the guiding lights of education in America, (Mondale & Patton, 2001) championed the move to non-church affiliated Common Schools, (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998) that were defined as “schools that the whole population would have

in common: tuition-free, tax-supported, meeting statewide standards of curriculum, textbooks, and facilities, staffed with teachers who had been trained in state Normal Schools, modeled on the French Ecole Normale” (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998, p. 97). From the mid-1830s to the mid-1860s, for instance, local families would pay tuition in addition to local taxes for their children who attended the Common School in such areas as rural New York (Beadie, 2008). These schools were largely educating the population using Protestant values as the basis of the curriculum, (Mondale & Patton, 2001) In 1842 when the New York Board of Education was established, one of its first edicts was to edit the Protestant dominated textbooks and remove all material offensive towards Catholics ((Mondale & Patton, 2001). It was through the arms of reformers like Mann that Jefferson’s dream of school for all was coming to fruition (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998, p. 97; Howe, 2002).

### **Mann’s Report for 1848**

Lueck notes that the purpose and structure that is so recognizable today was, as recently as 150 years ago, ambiguous and that the primary similarity between high schools was the age/level they catered to and that they were funded through taxes (Lueck, 2018). Despite the lack of consistency from one school to the next, there was an undercurrent belief that the schools would be a unifying and democratizing force in the country. As early as 1848, Horace Mann, in his “Report for 1848,” “shared that schooling promised to become “the great equalizer of the conditions of men’” (Ryan, 2005). In that notion, Mann was echoing Founding Father Thomas Jefferson’s vision that an educated citizenship would be the backbone of the fledgling United States of America and a bulwark against ignorance and its natural progeny, tyranny (Mondale & Patton, 2001).

### **Common School Improvements to Education and History**

Common Schools were also not as laissez faire regarding education and “Common School reformers also increased average daily attendance, the length of the school year, and offered different pedagogy and curriculum” (Neem, 2016, p. 55). In that sense Common Schools took a more systematic approach to all facets of education and set the stage for them to be seen as established as opposed to ad hoc institutions. This fact had an impact on how the schools were taxed and administered. Many schools were supported to some degree by general taxes despite the fact that many of these schools were actually started and/or administered by some denomination of a Church. Even as late as the 1890s, Catholic schools in some parts of America were receiving tax dollars. In fact, in some farm based remote areas of the country, public tax dollars were going to “public schools” even though these schools were actually run by the Church (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998).

In places like Ohio the unquestionable Jeffersonian thinking that school should be available to all was not in place. There it was felt that school was not in the purview of a taxed necessity and therefore “free.” Carl F. Kaestle (1983) “noted that despite a number of legislative victories in northern states in the mid-1830s, both the idea and the practice of “free” public schools struggled for decades to gain full acceptance (Beadie, 2008). In Ohio, however, it was felt that school should be made available to all and people could pay for their use of the school by paying either the school or teacher if they saw fit (Neem, 2016). In the spirit of patriotism leaders of the local communities were encouraged to assist with payment for those who could not afford such payment, such as orphans (Neem, 2016). By 1821, due to an economic struggle, it was difficult for the lay leadership to build and push local schools. New laws were passed that allowed communities to receive State funding to create schools and school districts and tax property in order to do so and to hire and

compensate teachers (Neem, 2016). This law was instrumental in setting the precedent that State and local funds could be combined, but control-over the school management, hiring of teachers, curriculum, etc.-would remain under local jurisdiction (Neem, 2016). State educational funding has a varied history across America. In Massachusetts, for example, it remained local as late as the 1830s whereas in New York, State funding began fifteen years earlier in 1815 (Beadie, 2008). By the 1830s, more and more Americans saw education as a gateway to a more successful life and the creation of more Common Schools and the access to education they provided became a self-fulfilling prophecy fueling a cycle resulting in increased desire for education (Neem, 2016).

### **Post-Revolutionary War and Education**

With Jefferson's hopes in mind, the school structure following the American Revolutionary War began to take on more of a formal and organized structure and Church values started seeping into the format and structure for the schools (Neem, 2016). At this point, the Federal Government provided minimal funds for education and it was at the local level, not even the State level, that financial provision for the education of the youth and citizenry relied (Neem, 2016). Many schools were extensions of the Churches in America, predominantly Protestant at the time (Mondale & Patton, 2001) but by the mid-nineteenth century, the influx of Catholics and Jews saw a destabilizing force to the locally run "Common Schools" as Public Schools were known at the time, especially in major immigrant hubs like New York (Mondale & Patton, 2001)

### **Post Civil War Enlightened Attitude Toward Education in America**

Following the Civil War, the echoes of Jefferson's desire for educational availability stirred the souls of those looking for public schools to be a uniting factor in the healing of the



country. Some maintained that had there been better education in place, an educated and thus patriotic populace would not have left the Union. Education for all was therefore seen not only as a way of raising the status of the people in the country, but as a safeguard from future civil wars (Groen, 2005). The role placed on codified education started to loom large in the hierarchies of the public's imagination, yet, the federal government did not come to support education in a significant manner until The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 which served as the tipping point for the Federal Government to begin in earnest to buttress public education (Howe, 2002). The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, also known as the Land-Grant College Act of 1862 or Morrill Act, set the stage for white and black children to receive public education following the Civil War (Howe, 2002). The aforementioned act "provided grants of land to states to finance the establishment of colleges specializing in "agriculture and the mechanic arts" (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Land-Grant-College-Act-of-1862>). While this Act did not directly impact high school education, it represented a major precedent in Federal recognition of the significance of education at the higher grade levels.

Around 25 years after the Civil War, the elixir education was sought to resemble forced Groen to speculate that education would have such an enlightening impact on the populace that the school teacher as Unionist missionary could have sown the seeds of positivity toward the North and prevented the Slave States from their uprising (Groen, 2005, p. 154). To support this claim, Groen (2025) notes that the States in the Union with a strong Common School history and presence generally did not rebel. North Carolina, situated in the Lower South, had prominent Common Schools as part of its culture and, as a result of their education, was more aligned with Unionist thinking as opposed to its contiguous states which, by and large, had little or no Common Schools. What this suggested was that

Jefferson was correct in hoping that a more educated population would be a more loyal population. It therefore was becoming evident that the party that controlled the Common Schools, and presumably its curriculum and its messaging, could be in a position to control the hearts and minds of the future of the United States. How much more so for Yeshivas who desired to steer the next generation of Jewish hearts and minds? If that meant adding another day of school, so be it.

After the Civil War, with the end of slavery, the Republican Party which had been firmly committed to ending slavery, saw education as its new rallying cry and supported Public Schools. In 1872, Harper's Weekly announced, "The Republican . . . party is founded upon popular education; [and] is the offspring of the common school" (Groen, 2005, 155; Lawrence 1872b). By the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Public Schools were the norm and 90% of students learning in America were learning in these Common Schools (Mondale and Patton, 2001). With wave after wave of immigrant populations coming to the shores of America, the Common School had to educate the population; teaching them how to farm, work in factories, and run businesses. Just 20 years after the Civil War major newspapers and magazines were touting public schools "as a source of national strength" (Goren, 2005, p.158). Enrollment in Public Schools in 1870 grew from 7.6 million students to 12.7 million (Mondale & Patton, 2001)

### **Funding School**

The notion of publicly funded education, to some, was becoming a manifest call to raise up the population and such clarion calls were seen as a mark of distinction for the person making such a claim (Pessen, 1967) and Yeshivas had often followed or started this model. In that sense, educational improvement took on the aura of a crusade that would free

people from the bonds of ignorance. William Seward, referring to Common Schools in 1839, deemed them “the great leveling institutions of the age” (Eakin, 2000; Lannie, 1964; Stacy, 2010 466). Just 30 years after the Ohio educational legislation was put into place, a paradigm shift had occurred and public education via the Common School was so entrenched in the State’s psyche that to upend the new status quo would have been possible political suicide (Neem, 2016) and lead to ignominy.

### **Education in America: Early 1900s-1930s**

By the start of the 1900s, almost all elementary school aged children in America were enrolled in Public Schools with only 20 percent of teenagers not enrolled in a public high school (Mondale & Patton, 2001). The look and curriculum of what is now the basic structure of almost all high schools, however, did not take its foundational shape until the time between WWI and WWII (Ryan, 2005). Up until that time, literature, math, and foreign languages were the norm, with many students leaving after 8<sup>th</sup> grade. With the rise of industrialization and with an economy and job market that was becoming more complicated, students stayed in school longer and more high schools were created (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Post-WWI however, saw the emergence of students’ school experience broaden to include music, drama, and the fine arts (Ryan, 2005). Despite this growth, things that the modern student would now take for granted, like access to books via an in a school library, was a relatively new phenomenon. Not all Public School libraries had librarians and it was not until WWII that the notion that a school should have a library and librarian was the commonplace expectation (Butler, 1999). With the exception of Ohio in 1864 and Oregon in 1857, there is almost no evidence of school librarians in any Public Schools until the 1920s (Butler, 1999). With the country moving closer and closer to a factory society and less of an

agrarian society, educators worked hand in hand with business leaders who promoted technical skill training courses (Ryan, 2005). This was also the time when the curricula on personal finances, personal hygiene, and reproduction were introduced and codified (Ryan, 2005). The “support staff” now taken for granted in most high schools in the form of guidance counselors, special education teachers, etc. slowly evolved. A number of schools offered psychological services on campus and had guidance counselors to assist in helping students choose the proper career paths (Ryan, 2005). This desire to push the boundaries and improve education did not abate, and indeed escalated, during the Great Depression as it caused “the collapse of the youth market” (Cohen, 2005, p. 511) and the desire for children to stay in school and not compete with those adults out of work and seeking employment (Cohen, 2005).

### **How Sunday Became A Day Off Too**

Public School on Sunday for the society at large was not an option because by 1902, the Christian Sabbath of Sunday was protected by law and customs as a holy (non-work day) prohibiting public activities such as work and school (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018). Following the precedent set by British law, American law set aside Sunday as a day of rest and religious practice so that nonobservant Christians would be free to attend Church services. Almost all businesses and industries operated on a six-day week, Monday through Saturday with Sunday as the day off to respect Christian practices of observing their Sabbath (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018). Without adults working on Sunday, because jobs were not available, there was no need to take children out of the workforce on that day.

These laws and customs were in play as far back as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Almost all businesses and industries operated on a six-day week, Monday through Saturday with

Sunday as the day off to respect Christian practices of observing their Sabbath (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018). These laws made it difficult for Jewish workers to find employment as they observed the Sabbath on Saturday. With most businesses shut down on Sunday, Jews could only work a maximum of five days a week Monday through Sundown on Friday (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018). It was not until 1908 when Jewish mill workers blazed the trail for a five-day work week-spurring the creation of the modern Monday through Friday five-day work week. The owners of a New England mill changed the work days so Jews were granted the opportunity to work on Sunday to make up work missed from their Sabbath observance on Saturday. This caused no small amount of consternation amongst Christian workers-as they were working Monday-Saturday as opposed to the Jews who were working Sunday-Friday. The Christians did not like the idea of their fellow (Jewish) co-workers working on Sunday and eventually the mill closed for everyone for Saturday and Sunday (Sopher, 2014). Soon after, other factories closed for two days a week (Sopher, 2014).

Up until this time, the movement for a shorter work week had met with limited success. Due to dangers inherent in the workplace of the late 1800s, with new machinery and the march toward progress, workers faced harsh conditions and inhuman treatment from ownership (Rosner and Narkowitz, 2020). For example, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, New York City bakers repeatedly protested over their intensely hot and dangerous places of work in unventilated basements. Eighteen hour workdays forced the bakers to the streets to strike in an effort to create safer working conditions. The New York State legislature, in 1895, enacted laws putting caps on how many hours bakery workers could work, limiting it to 10 hours a day or a maximum of sixty hours a week (Rosner & Narkowitz, 2020, p. 623). Emboldened by the bakers' protests, in May 1886, workers in the thousands took to

the streets for the first May Day Parade in Chicago demanding better pay, shorter hours, and a shorter work week which resulted in thousands upon thousands of workers striking across the country in search of better pay and fewer hours and days working (Rosner & Narkowitz, 2020, p. 623)

It was not until the 1920s that the widespread notion of the five-day workweek took hold of the imagination of workers, (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018) and not just Jews who presumably would have worked six days a week had they been given the opportunity. By 1927, full manifestos were appearing in periodicals like the “Sabbath Bulletin” dedicating page after page to the glory of the five-day work-week (Moskoff & Gayle, 2018).

### **Education, IQ, and Tracking**

This association with school as essentially both temporary vocational deterrent and eventual vocational preparation (which was the original intended idea), as opposed to the Jeffersonian idea of high educational ideals and a thinking people, continued to fuel the debates over how education should be conducted. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were numerous movements to change curriculum and pedagogy based on recommendations of newly emerged educational schools and their graduates. Some felt that schools were too intellectual and sought to create an almost direct pipeline from school to job with education and curricula reflecting this mindset (Mondale & Patton, 2001). The rise of I.Q. exams, first used to identify officers for the U.S. Army during WWI, contributed in many schools to procedures to assign certain students (mostly immigrants) to certain (vocational) tracks (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Concurrently, educational progressives like John Dewey out of the University of Chicago were rethinking education and focused on “learning by doing” and building the

curriculum and school around the interests of students (Mondale & Patton, 2001). At the Department of Education at Stanford University, Ellwood P. Cubberley was creating the science of school management and the notion of “tracking.” Many reforms to the traditional/entrenched schedule and attitude toward schooling were met with resistance (see Appendix A for more information on such reforms).

### **The Role of the School Library and Gateway to Values**

To that end, people recognized that the “wrong” book in impressionable young hands could undermine traditional values of what the country stood for (Butler, 1999). In 1920, the Certain Report, was established in an effort to train librarians in not only library science, but to instill in them a standard regarding their moral obligation as arbiters of taste and a recognition that they were on the front lines of what books students could read and what behaviors they could, perhaps, emulate, as life often imitates art (Butler, 1999).

### **Education and the Working Class**

This was especially true for working-class families who saw schooling as both a practical means to ensure their children’s future and also a political platform (Cohen, 2005). While many would see the working class embracing the centrality of education as unique to their typical upwardly mobile approach to life, the significance of school was true for lower and upper class families as well. The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy determined that as early on as the 1940s, the role of public schools, and specifically the role that high school played and its potential to provide access to a better life was an understanding that crossed all class lines (Cohen, 2005).

After 1930, the Common School, thanks to progressive educational theory, not to mention a tradition that spanned close to 100 years, wanted to disengage from its core Protestant lineage and become more detached from an overtly religious stance (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998). Additionally, during the Great Depression, the public was consumed with the idea that school would be the ticket to a better life for all those who completed their schooling. The American dream was becoming entangled with the idea of schooling as the vehicle to said dream, a job, house, and a good life, and, just as the American dream was to be open to all as a right, so too education was being seen as a core American value (Cohen, 2005). By the 1950s, Ceaser and McGuinn declared that “this was the golden moment of the common school in America” (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998, 100) as it fulfilled its progressive promise of delivering top quality education to a diverse population; instilling in them “American” values, which of course may have overlapped with Protestant values, but were not in fact presented as Protestant teachings. Schooling was indeed becoming the pathway to a better life and the American dream. By 1975 close to 90 percent of children in the United States were enrolled in public school (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998). There was a slight decline in Public School attendance in the 1980s, with close to 85% of American children still being enrolled in Public schools to this day (Ceaser and McGuinn, 1998).

### **Fair Labor Standards Act and Education**

Indeed, while great strides had been made to improve education, such as the introduction of new support staff like librarians and coaches to man the burgeoning extracurricular programs, by the 1940s the typical school was still not a bastion of elite education and enlightenment (Cohen, 2005). Most schools still served the function of holding teenagers in place, keeping them out of the workforce until they aged and were



forced to be allowed entry (Cohen, 2005). In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed, limiting children's workweek to 44 hours and protecting them from numerous occupational hazards (Schuman, 2017). While this law did not impact children working in remote farms and the government did not have the resources to fully police these laws, (Scuman, 2017) the stage was set for it to be inefficient to hire children, no matter how cost effective, considering the limits on their work time. In Post WWII America, the Civil Rights movement was instrumental in many areas, culminating in *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregating schools in 1954, (Mondale & Patton, 2001) but what is lesser known is the key role it played in ensuring that the right to an education, and a quality one at that, would be made available to all (Cohen, 2005).

### **Post-WWII Challenges to American Education**

#### **America Taken to School**

The post-WWII challenges faced by public schools were more curriculum and pedagogically based than the debates of the previous centuries. Now that Public School was a reality and a treasured American institution, what riches the treasure bestowed became the battleground for debate. In 1953, Arthur Bestor published "Educational Wastelands" where he argued that progressive education, rooted in acclimating an immigrant population to America, was slowly reduced to teaching *all* students the basics such as hygiene and how to dress properly. He argued that in an effort to educate all, the rigor had been taken out of education (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Additionally, there was a concern that "supplementary" education, such as art and music, were detrimental to the educational development of students. Bestor's concerns were vindicated in the collective trauma shared by all Americans when the USSR launched Sputnik in 1957. There was little denying that

Russia's ability to enter outer space before the USA was a blight on the efficacy of American education (Mondale & Patton, 2001). This culminated in President Eisenhower's National Defense Education Act in 1958 which for the first time provided an annual influx of Federal money of 100 million dollars toward education so America could win the space race (Mondale & Patton, 2001). The core curriculum was reprising its role, and education, while being used as a vehicle for American advancement in the world, once again veered toward the practical and vocational as opposed to more student centered and artistic directions proposed by Dewey and the previous generation's reformers and progressives.

The next steps in the evolution of American education included the realization of the promise of education as the equalization force of the nation. As noted earlier, until *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* 1954, the idea of separate but equal under the law was still in effect. The schools did not truly begin to integrate until 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act that prevented racial discrimination for all federally funded programs including schools (Mondale & Patton, 2001). It was not until 1972 when 91% of southern black students were in integrated schools that significant gains could be declared (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Also in 1972, Title IX saw that there could be no discrimination based on gender in federally funded programs (Mondale & Patton, 2001). As with the *Brown v. Board of Education*, it took many years and cases for Title IX to have a significant impact but by the 1990's, 40% of athletes in high school were of the female gender (Mondale & Patton, 2001). In 1976, the Civil Rights legislation also helped students with disabilities putting the onus on schools to not only treat people equally but to give them the resources necessary to succeed in school (Mondale & Patton, 2001).

By the 1960s and 1970s, schools were more legally accountable to take into consideration the needs for all. “Educational reformers” however, were accused of using “schools to control working-class people” and seeking to promote social and economic stagnation and inequality (Gordon, 2015, p. 762). The introduction of a more corporate (minded) approach to education came to the forefront of educational fears in the 1980s. In the mid-1970s, American businesses, particularly in the auto industry, were losing ground to Germany and Japan (Mondale & Patton, 2001). In other areas such as manufacturing, there was a fear similar to the one that emerged after Sputnik that American schools, once amongst the world’s best, were now in disarray and decline. In 1983, “A Nation at Risk,” a presidential commission on education, supported the country’s dread. New graduation requirements were initiated, and other reforms, such as extending the school year and increased testing (Mondale & Patton, 2001) were implemented. The educational system, following the example of corporate America, sought to move education in a direction of the market economy where only the schools succeeding would continue and failing schools would come under new management or be closed (Mondale & Patton, 2001). The White House also wanted to increase school vouchers; the privatization of schools; and access to Magnet and Charter schools (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Additionally, the report recommended higher academic standards as well as a longer school day and extended school year (Mondale & Patton, 2001). By 1992, President George H.W. Bush fully endorsed this approach and the educational opportunities it could present for the underprivileged (Mondale & Patton, 2001). In 1997 the voucher program established in Milwaukee and elsewhere was deemed a widespread success and was mimicked in many places across the country (Mondale & Patton, 2001). The educational diversity of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century continued with

President Bill Clinton at the helm of the country. By 2001, Clinton set the stage for the existence of 2,100 charter schools with 173 administered by for-profit organizations (Mondale & Patton, 2001).

The vast, independent, largely voluntary schools of the country's founding that were deeply rooted in religious instruction, were now, over the span of 200 or so years, while no longer religious, were now the mandatory center of the lives for most children in the country. Currently, the diversity in pedagogy and goals of public schools is broad, and varies across and within states, districts, and schools. Regardless, all are part of a modern understanding of what education should be, and are committed to their students' growth, rather than the mere holding places for children they were once designed to be.

## **Appendix B**

### **Adult Vs. Child Salary Comparison in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century America**

In the textile industry, for example, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an adult male would earn \$6 to \$7 a week, while a child would receive only \$2 for the same amount of time worked (Schuman, 2017).

## Appendix C

### Democracy and American Westward Expansion

The ideals of American Democracy were also evident as the country expanded West. (For a more detailed look at the Post-Civil War American attitude toward school see Appendix A.) For those who settled the West because they were tired of the East, as well as immigrants seeking stability and a future in this untamed land, education was seen as a civilizing force that would allow them to put down roots (Mondale & Patton, 2001). People like Catherine Beecher instilled in a new generation of young, female teachers, an almost missionary-like zeal to go West, start schools, and bring light to the darkness (Mondale & Patton, 2001). (For more on school funding see Appendix A.) In point of fact, the history of education in America is the history of recognizing how education is beyond knowledge but about the accumulation of values and identity. (For more on the role of education and identity in the early 1900s in America see Appendix A). The Yeshiva model, by traditionally having even more schooling was adept at inculcating these values in the students and building bonds between the ever-present Rabbi and students.

## Appendix D

### School Culture and Emerging Youth Identity

It is truly remarkable to think that the modern idea of education, continuing schooling throughout adolescence and making the high school experience an iconic feature of the American landscape, was ultimately established to take potential job threats away from an unemployed population. (For details on the role the law played in modern schooling and for Post-WWII Challenges to American Education see Appendix A.)

Constant challenge to the status quo emerges as a common theme in the history of education as reformers frequently seek to implement change. The notion of Stare Decisis, “to stand by that which has been decided,” is foreign to the history of education. It is worth noting that despite frequent change, the education system has yielded impressive outcomes. Using graduation results as a metric, compare the fact that six out of seven students graduate high school today as opposed to the fifty percent graduation rate of the 1950’s and the 5% seen at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Ryan, 2005). The story of education in America is a story of steady progress for all, and an entity that recognizes its imperfections and seeks to constantly change and improve. It is also a story that shows that one’s environment, especially a school where one spends most of his/her waking hours, has an impact on one’s core identity and relationship to the society at large. If a student in an American Public school was being taught to uphold American values, it is also true that a student in a Modern Orthodox Yeshiva is being taught to uphold American and Jewish values. The fact that he is being taught such values in an Alternative Configuration, should have an impact on just how deep those values are embedded in the soul of such an individual.

## Appendix E

### Definition of Terms

**Derech**-Hebrew for “Path” as in the path or lifestyle a Jew is taking towards or away from Jewish Law observance. For example, “He is going off the Derech” translates as, “He is in the process of no longer being a practicing/observant Jew.”

**Halacha**-Code of Jewish Law

**Keshet**-translated from the Hebrew as “connection” as in, “A keshet between a student and a Rabbi.”

**Phylacteries**-leather straps worn on the arm and head of a Jewish boy upon turning Bar Mitzvah at the age of 13. Contained in the boxes that are attached to the straps are quotes from the Torah.

**Rabbi**-Ordained, expert in Jewish Law and who serves as a teacher or spiritual leader of a Jewish community.

**Rebbe**-affectionate term for one’s personal Rabbi whom one views as a role model and spiritual guide.

**Yarmulka**-the traditional head-covering for Orthodox Jewish boys and men that signifies that G-d is always above them. Symbolically it is one of the key indicators that one is a practicing Jewish boy or man.