



Blog Article

What Jewish Day Schools Do to Graduate Alumni Willing to Advocate for and Patronize Their Alma Maters

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In the private school world, alumni represent a major source of endowment funding, volunteer and advocacy power, and enrollment potential-- when they send their children to their alma maters. This is support Jewish day schools vitally need to ensure their vitality.

However, the reality I have seen play out all too frequently in my work helping Jewish day schools increase their enrollment, is that while some Jewish day schools succeed in recruiting alumni as active ambassadors and as sources of enrollment, others face a significant amount of difficulty in both areas. In an attempt to gain clarity about how to increase the propensity of alumni to be ambassadors and enroll their children, I reviewed the survey responses of 1200 Jewish day school alumni from four Jewish day schools with high schools who had responded to Measuring Success alumni surveys during the 2013-15 period. Two of the schools had relatively high levels of alumni support (50%+ would highly recommend their alma maters to a friend and enroll their children) and two of which had significantly lower levels of support (~35% scores on the same issues). What were the differentiating factors between schools with high and low alumni support?

Let's start with the factors that did not differentiate them? The school pairs did not differ on their assessment of the quality of their academic preparation in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, History and Social Studies or Music/Drama/Dance/Performing Arts or Visual Arts. Nor did they differ in their perceptions of the extent to which they felt their schools supported them in being accepted to an appropriate college or in preparing them for a career of their choice.

Where they differed significantly was in three key areas.



First, in the extent to which the alums felt their schools had a strong positive impact on their **efforts to develop critical thinking skills.**



Second, in the extent to which they felt their school had a strong positive impact on their **efforts to develop empathy for others.**



Third, in the extent to which they strongly agreed their schools **supported their motivation to take on leadership roles.**

Taken collectively, this represents a phenomenally potent toolkit for productive, ethical, and contributive living. These are lifetime “gifts” that would inspire great appreciation. Yes, this is a small sample of schools. In fact, Measuring Success will be working with Prizmah over the coming months to recruit twenty or more Jewish Day Schools for a new round of alumni surveys, and we hope to grow the sample size significantly. But, in the interim, it is worth considering how effectively your school is making these “gifts” part of your school’s blueprint for creating a legacy of alumni connection and affinity.

Contact Harry.bloom@measuring-success.com to discuss the research findings.