



# Public Schools Impact Report

FOR THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR



**UJA FEDERATION**  
of Greater Toronto



# Safety. Visibility. Pride.

What every Jewish student deserves—in any school they attend.

Approximately two-thirds of Jewish students in the GTA attend public school. UJA Federation of Greater Toronto is committed to making those schools safer for Jewish students and to ensuring every one of them can express their Jewish identity with confidence and pride.

FOREWORD

## A Letter from UJA

A note on UJA's public school strategy: what families told us they needed and what was built in response.

The landscape for Jewish families in public schools has changed. Antisemitism is more visible, more brazen, and harder to ignore. But that is not the whole story. Since October 7th, many parents have been asking different questions about what it means for their children to be Jewish in public school—not only about safety, but about connection, representation, and belonging.

In spring 2025, we sat down with parents, students, and Jewish staff in public schools (and in non-Jewish private schools) and asked them what support they were looking for—in their schools and beyond. What they told us confirmed what the moment demanded: a co-ordinated, community-wide effort to make public schools safer for Jewish students, and to ensure that being in the public system never means setting aside who you are.

And so we mobilized, developing a plan built around two foundational goals:

- 1. Making public schools safer for Jewish students.**
- 2. Strengthening the Jewish identity of students in public schools.**

These are not separate goals. Each goal strengthens the other.

That work takes many forms. It means taking educators—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—to Israel, because someone who has been there returns with an understanding of Jewish peoplehood and connection that no classroom session can replicate.

It means helping teachers better understand Jewish identity, history, and antisemitism. It means building classroom resources and tools that remain in schools long after a single program ends. It means funding student groups where Jewish life is visible and present. And it means showing up in school boards, at Queen's Park, and in the courts when institutions fail Jewish students and families.

None of this work is abstract. Every initiative described here was built in direct response to what families and students told us they needed.

That response moves through an ecosystem, in which UJA's role is to convene, co-ordinate, and invest—so that what each organization does extends further than it could alone. This includes the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), which pursues policy change, legal accountability, and legislative reform on a national level. The Toronto Holocaust Museum (THM) facilitates teacher training based on best practices in countering antisemitism and Holocaust education, while also welcoming thousands of students from public schools across the GTA to its state-of-the-art facility. Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA) develops Jewish heritage resources used in classrooms around the province. Allied organizations working in tandem extend the reach further still.

This is one of the clearest expressions of our commitment to Jewish students, families, and educators in public schools.

*Here is what that looks like.*

# The Strategy

## GOAL 1

### Make public schools safer spaces for Jewish students.

Educate public school educators about Judaism, Jewish history and heritage, Israel, and antisemitism.

Educators shape school culture every day. Helping educators of all backgrounds better understand Jewish identity and antisemitism creates safer, more informed environments for Jewish students.

### Support Jewish students, their families, and Jewish educators facing antisemitism.

When incidents occur, families need more than reassurance. They need advocacy, guidance, and accountability – and the practical capacity to act. UJA—working alongside CIJA and community organizations—provides that.

Educate non-Jewish students about Judaism, Jewish history and heritage, Israel, and antisemitism.

Reducing ignorance begins with exposure, learning, and conversation—helping students encounter Jewish life and history in meaningful ways.

## GOAL 2

### Strengthen the Jewish identity of students in public schools.

Strengthen Jewish programming for public school students outside of school.

Jewish identity is built across classrooms, camps, community spaces, and experiences that help students feel connected to Jewish life beyond the school day.

### Increase Jewish resources in public schools.

Classroom resources and tools bring Jewish learning into schools—ensuring Jewish history, culture, and identity are present for every student.

Support Jewish programming within public schools and boards.

Celebrating Jewish life inside schools—through clubs, events, and everyday visibility—helps students build Jewish identity in the places they spend most of their time.

### Support Jewish staff in public schools.

Supporting Jewish educators and staff creates a school community where Jewish identity is not just taught but visible and appreciated—and where Jewish students are less likely to feel alone in it.

1.0 Jewish Heritage Month - 2026



# UJA's Work Operates Across Five Interconnected Fronts

1.1

No single initiative can change what it feels like to be a Jewish student in public school.

Real change happens when support exists throughout the school experience—in classrooms, student life, learning resources, school leadership, and the communities that form around them.



## 01 EDUCATE EDUCATORS

Teachers, staff, and administrators are trained on Jewish identity, antisemitism, Holocaust education, and Israel—because students are safer when the adults around them understand what they are seeing.

**In practice:** Israel Educator Trips, in partnership with JFC-UIA (Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal), The Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Azrieli Foundation, monthly educator convenings, teacher-candidate training, and professional development programs. The latter includes education on contemporary antisemitism and antizionism, developed in collaboration with THM, OJA, CIJA, and allied organizations.

## 02 REACH STUDENTS

Programs, exhibits, and museum learning experiences help students better understand Jewish life, history, and antisemitism.

**In practice:** ShinShinim visits, peer-led presentations, THM learning, and OJA heritage exhibits and tours.

## 03 STRENGTHEN IDENTITY

Jewish student groups, heritage programming, and community partnerships help students experience Jewish life openly and confidently.

**In practice:** Jewish Student Union (JSU) and Jewish Student Alliance (JSA) partnerships, Hanukkah and Jewish Heritage Month programming, holiday packages, and March Break programs.

## 04 EQUIP SCHOOLS

Lesson plans, learning units, and classroom resources and tools help Jewish learning remain part of school life over time.

**In practice:** Teacher Resource Database, PJ Library lesson plans, and Jewish identity learning units across K-12.

1.2



1.1 & 1.2 Public school students visit the Toronto Holocaust Museum, 2024. Photos by Liora Kogan for the Toronto Holocaust Museum

## 05 SUPPORT FAMILIES

Guidance, advocacy, and rapid-response support help students, parents, educators, and school communities navigate antisemitism when it occurs.

**In practice:** CIJA policy and legal work (including the Legal Task Force), antisemitism reporting and case management, learning opportunities for parents, and support for parent mobilization groups.

# What This Work Looks Like Across the Public School System

The reach of this work—for students, educators, schools, and communities—is reflected in what follows.

## SCHOOL LIFE

### 30,000 students across 50 schools

participated in Jewish Heritage Month programming across seven school boards.

### 15,000 students across five school boards

participated in Hanukkah programming across 30 schools.

### 40 Jewish student groups

partnered with and were supported through JSU and JSA programming.

### Seven school boards

supported in staff holiday programming for both Hanukkah and Jewish Heritage Month.

### 407 students

trained in Campus Ready, a program that helps Jewish students to grapple with the challenge of antizionism on campus.

## EDUCATOR LEARNING

### 500 educators across 10 school boards

reached through the THM and its professional development programming.

### 1,000 teachers

reached through OJA resources.

### 1,340 educators across seven school boards\*

trained in Jewish identity, antisemitism, Holocaust education, and Israel education.

### 90 future educators

reached through teacher-candidate training at two universities before they enter the classroom.

### 75 educators each month

convene through the Jewish Educators of the GTA (JEGTA) across five school boards.

### 127 educators and administrators

participated in immersive Israel Educator Trips, in partnership with JFC-UJA, the Azrieli Foundation, and The Jewish Agency for Israel—including 107 from the GTA.

\*1,340 educators across seven school boards breakdown:

**No Silence on Race:** 300 educators participated in a workshop from this non-profit organization that is dedicated to advocating for inclusive Jewish spaces in Canada that reflect the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our communities.

**Campus Ready:** From Makom, the Israel Education Laboratory of The Jewish Agency. 500 teachers entered the parallel training program for educators.

**Jewish identity curriculum resources:** 300 educators trained.

**The Movement Against Antizionism:** 90 educators, union members, and campus leaders received training from this non-partisan emergency-response initiative that confronts a rapidly escalating antizionist hate movement that is actively endangering Jewish communities worldwide.

**CJIA Lunch and Learns:** Five schools, 150+ educators.



1.3 Public school teachers attending "Tools for Today" at the Toronto Holocaust Museum. Photos by Liora Kogan for the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, 2025.

## LEARNING RESOURCES & CLASSROOM TOOLS

### 23,000 students

engaged with the educational programs at THM.

### New THM classroom resources

including *Unpacking Canadian Antisemitism*, a Ministry of Education-funded documentary and classroom resource developed to support Ontario's updated Grade 10 history curriculum.

### 6,000 students

reached by ShinShinim through public school programs.

### 350 non-Jewish students

reached through nine Student-to-Student (STS) presentations—peer-led sessions in which Jewish students share their identity and history with other students.

### 1,500 schools

received Jewish educational resources for classrooms and libraries.

### 400+ teachers

are now using Jewish identity learning units across grades 1–2, 3–4, 9, and 12.

### 7,000+ PJ Library books

delivered into school libraries, 400 holiday resource packages distributed per holiday, and 400 Jewish Heritage Month resource kits distributed.

### 12 lesson plans

developed to pair with PJ Library books, giving educators tools to build on what students are reading.

### Jewish Heritage Month digital guide

is a planning and classroom resource for educators covering the month's themes, programming ideas, and community events. Released March 2026.

### OJA educator resources

Currently in development; 3,000 teachers already engaging with existing online resources.

### Jewish Ed portal

an online hub offering resources for Ontario educators on antisemitism, Jewish identity and heritage, the Holocaust, and Israel education. Launched in 2026.

### York Region Jewish Heritage Month Panel Exhibit

is a traveling panel exhibition of Jewish history in York Region, shared across schools and libraries.

**ADVOCACY, POLICY, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**Bill 33 passed with CIJA's recommendations**

on school board accountability incorporated into the legislation.

**Landmark legal case**

won against the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), strengthening school board accountability to parents.

**Advocacy Day at Queen's Park**

advanced education priorities directly with the offices of the Premier and relevant ministers, alongside teachers and parents.

**72 Ontario school boards**

is the scope of UJA's provincial policy advocacy.

**CIJA's Legal Task Force**

is pursuing active legal cases involving Ontario school boards (K-12).

**40 parents participated**

in UJA public school parent educational initiatives.

**Antisemitism reporting portal**

involves case management for students, parents, and Jewish educators navigating incidents inside schools.

**Jewish Families in TDSB (JFIT)**

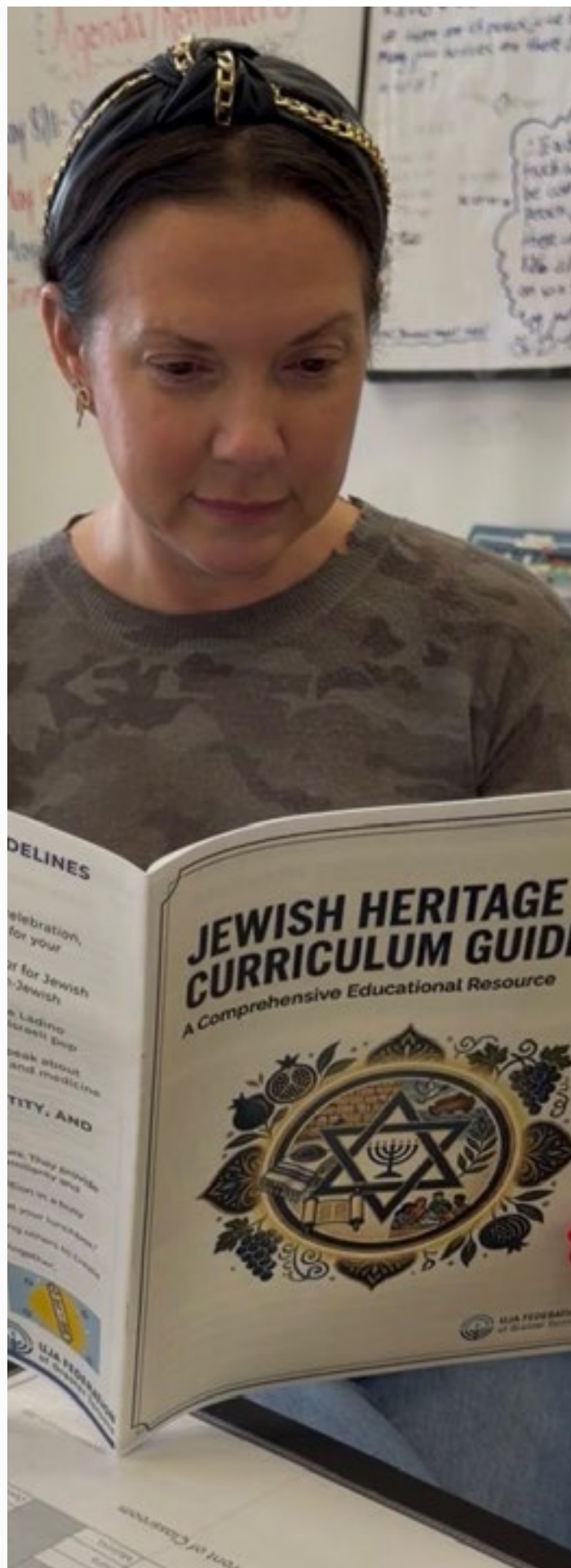
is a grassroots parent peer-to-peer network launching to support Jewish families across TDSB public schools.

**Jewish Families Connected (YRDSB)**

is a grassroots parent peer-to-peer network launching to support Jewish families across York Region public schools.

**Rapid-response capacity**

a contact list of trained community staff, advocates, and legal resources ready to activate when an antisemitism incident is reported.

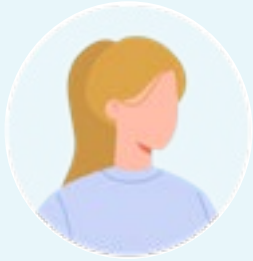


**Affirming Jewish Identity in Public Schools**

Lasting change in schools does not happen through a single assembly, event, or presentation. It happens when learning becomes part of classrooms, educator practice, and school culture over time.



# What the Work Sounds Like



Student, Grade 11, TDSB

“My Jewish culture club gives me a space where I feel comfortable being myself and proud of my Jewish identity. Especially at a time when antisemitism has increased, having a space to connect with my culture and community feels more important than ever.”



Student, Grade 10, TDSB

“At the THM visit I was greatly able to connect to my Jewish ancestry, which I would recommend to others as it is the best way to learn about your family’s past. This was an incredible, eye-opening experience that helped me connect with my Jewish heritage.”



Parent, TDSB

“We received prompt, engaged and substantive support from UJA when we sought a learning resource guide for our K-8 public school. UJA Toronto sprang into action to create an incredible resource for Ontario, and provided timely and thoughtful engagement as we were planning our Jewish Heritage Month assembly.

We were provided with help from ShinShinim, archival resources, and financial support to enable a day of celebrating Jewish joy and heritage within the TDSB. Many students told us and their parents it was the best day they ever had at school – and the first time they had celebrated Jewish Heritage at a TDSB assembly. Our children and family were immensely proud of the impact we had on the broader school community.”



Educator, Activist, and Artist, TDSB

“I grew up in a small industrial town in the Niagara region. My parents never pressured me to follow my Italian/Irish Catholic roots, so I marched to the beat of my own drum from a young age. This support allowed me to use my artistic talents to bring people together through art and make others feel visible and valued.

I was deeply affected by the events of October 7th and the global antisemitism that followed. As an educator, I could not sit by as Jewish students were denied access to their campuses—a denial of the universal human right to education.

Sadly, antisemitism has always been lingering in plain sight. But watching the blatant attacks on the Jewish community from October 8th and onward compelled me to speak up and do something. When the opportunity to travel to Israel with UJA and 30 incredibly passionate and knowledgeable educators presented itself, I had to go.

Stronger Together felt like the perfect way for me to seek clarity during these misguided times. I decided to walk the walk, talk the talk, live the experience, and lead with my new findings.

I had always heard that Israelis are resilient, intellectual, straight-talking, and community-embracing. The people of Israel did not disappoint. The highlight for me was hearing perspectives from all sorts of different people, including journalists, October 7th survivors, families of those who died, and artists.

My trip to Israel was nothing short of life-altering. It not only inspired me as an educator and activist, but it also inspired my creative soul. I have returned to Canada with 30 new friends who have been an outstanding support crew, and I am already making plans to return one day.”



WHAT'S NEXT

## The Work Isn't Done

The needs facing Jewish students in public schools did not begin this year, and they will not end with it. The work ahead is about deepening what has been built—strengthening the relationships, resources, and community networks that help Jewish students feel safer and prouder in the schools they attend.

### Continue educating educators.

UJA will continue investing in educators through upcoming Israel Educator Trips, ongoing professional development, and expanded classroom resources and tools that help educators understand Judaism, Jewish history and heritage, Israel, and antisemitism.

### Pursue policy and legal action where harm is structural.

UJA and CIJA will continue advancing system-level change through government advocacy, legal action, and school-board accountability efforts where Jewish students and families are being failed.

### Strengthen support for families.

UJA will continue building parent and family support through peer networks, expanded case management, rapid-response capacity, and parent-focused learning opportunities.

### Deepen Jewish identity programming inside schools.

Jewish student groups, ShinShinim visits, holiday programming, and Jewish Heritage Month initiatives will continue helping Jewish students experience Jewish life openly and with pride within their school communities.

### Build on what is already working.

The programs, trained educators, community partnerships, and classroom resources already reaching students, schools, and families will continue to grow.

*None of this happens without the community building it together.*



## Safety. Visibility. Pride.

For every Jewish student, in every public school they attend.

This is what UJA's communal response looks like in practice: co-ordinated work across classrooms, student groups, school boards, learning resources, family support, legal advocacy, and Jewish communal life itself.

The goal is not only to respond when harm occurs, but to build school environments where Jewish students can be openly and proudly Jewish—as a matter of course.

