

Vote Smart Israel | Education

February 2015

Expenditure per primary school student in Israel was 24% lower than the OECD average; post-primary school spending was 62% lower (in 2010)

- Between 2000 and 2014, the Ministry of Education spent an average of only 96% of its budget allocation, translating to hundreds of millions of shekels each year that remain unutilized. In 2012, the unspent budget reached NIS 1.34 billion.
- Primary school classes are more overcrowded in Israel than in 26 out of 29 other OECD countries. Lower secondary school overcrowding placed Israel 22nd out of 26 countries.*
- There are wide gaps between students in the Israeli education system:
 - Achievement gaps between students in core curriculum subjects –
 even excluding the Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews) who do not learn
 these subjects and do not participate in the exams are consistently
 among the largest in developed countries.
 - Formal education among Haredim is declining: The share of 35-54-year-old Haredi men with only a primary school education rose from 31% to 47% in less than a decade. At the same time, the rate of those completing post-primary education in this group fell from 26% to 12%.
- In the past decades, investment in universities has seriously declined:
 - Per student public expenditure on higher education declined from NIS 82,400 in 1979 to NIS 26,500 in 2011 (in 2010 prices).
 - Between 1973 and 2011, the number of students in research universities rose by 157%, while the number of senior faculty rose by only 9%.

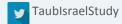
* Data taken from Education at a Glance (OECD, 2014)

Key questions for policymakers:

- What steps should be taken to narrow the gaps between students in the education system?
- What position should be taken regarding core curriculum studies in the Haredi schools?
- How can the high level of Israel's research universities be protected?

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For much more on this topic, see the following Taub Center publications:

- ✓ Trends in the Development of the Education System (Nachum Blass, State of the Nation Report 2014)
- ✓ The Ministry of Education's Budget 2000-2014: Issues and Problems (Nachum Blass and Yulia Cogan)
- ✓ Education and Employment in the Haredi Sector (Eitan Regev, State of the Nation Report 2013)
- ✓ Update on the State of Israel's Universities and Its Researchers (Dan Ben-David, State of the Nation Report 2013)
- ✓ A Picture of the Nation 2014 (Dan Ben-David)

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Established in 1982 under the leadership and vision of Herbert M. Singer, Henry Taub, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Center is funded by a permanent endowment created by the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation, the Herbert M. and Nell Singer Foundation, Jane and John Colman, the Kolker-Saxon-Hallock Family Foundation, the Milton A. and Roslyn Z. Wolf Family Foundation, and the JDC.

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