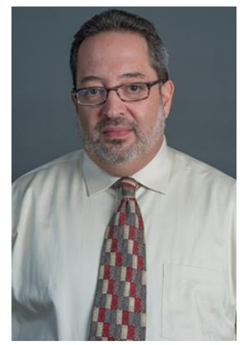
May 2015

JData Revealed

JEWISH EDUCATION DATA WHEN YOU WANT IT

We Can't Make Bricks without Clay



In "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" detective Sherlock Holmes, frustrated by the challenges of his investigation, decries: "Data! Data! Data! I can't make bricks without clay!"

Being in the business of data, we at JData know that this is a sentiment shared by many leaders and decision-makers. Data are the basic building blocks of analysis. We need data to truly know and understand our organizations and communities.

JData was created to serve as a central repository of data about Jewish education. Starting with a core set of metrics drawn from years of research conducted here at Brandeis University, the platform and datasets we hold have already proven to be tremendously valuable to the Jewish world.

Each year, we and the communities and organizations with whom we work face a Sherlockian challenge: getting the data. Many schools fall somewhere between hesitant and resistant to sharing their data with us, and their reasons have nothing to do with our ***research methodology*** or ***confidentiality policy***. It is usually a matter of trust: They are wary of communal and/or national organizations; they fear possible negative consequences from data sharing, especially from competitors and naysayers within their own communities; they are concerned that their data are not safe; they wonder if it is worth their time and effort.

I champion data sharing as the gateway to innovation and opportunity in Jewish education. A multi-billion dollar enterprise like Jewish education demands robust data to help ensure sound planning, funding, and visioning decisions. Because of JData, the ways in which the Jewish education field gathers and uses data have been completely transformed—which, in turn, has significantly improved the quality of work, programming, and strategy nationwide.

The Jewish overnight camping world has made a strong commitment to data, and the field is better and stronger because of it. (This issue of *JData Revealed* ***highlights*** some of this work.) We are in the second year of a pilot project on day camps that could lead to similar deep impact. The study we are working on now about day school finances is already generating great interest. Several of our community partners are interested in understanding the work of part-time schools and early childhood centers, and it is possible that more data on these educational sectors could yield meaningful national attention.

Again, from Sherlock Holmes: "Never theorize before you have data. Invariably, you end up twisting facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts." Drawing from our rich dataset, JData regularly speaks about the challenges and opportunities that face schools and camps. The more data we have, the better able we will be to help and support your work, and the work of those passionate about Jewish education.

Jonathan "J.C." Cohen, MAJCS/MSW
Executive Director, JData

Same, Changed, New—Three Takes on Overnight Camp

Amy L. Sales, Ph.D., JData Principal Investigator

In each of the past five years, nonprofit Jewish overnight camps—through their association with their movements, ***JCamp 180*** and the ***Foundation for Jewish Camp***—have entered their data into JData. This year's report shows how camps have remained the same and how they have changed. It also includes new information about the field. Data are based on Summer 2014 and were retrieved from ***www.jdata.com*** on January 12, 2015.

Definition of the Field

Same: Foundation for Jewish Camp continues to have the most comprehensive list of nonprofit Jewish overnight camps and to represent the broadest swath of the field.

Changed: In 2014, FJC's list included 156 organizations, an increase of six camps over the previous year. In fact, FJC gained eight camps (four start-ups and four pre-existing camps), but also lost two camps that discontinued their overnight camp operations.

New: The six additions include specialty camps and other summer programs and experiences. As alternatives to traditional camp join the network, the meaning of "camp" is shifting to include a broader array of summer experiences.

Enrollment

Changed: In Summer 2014, the total count of campers was 73,453, an increase of about 4.5% from the previous summer. (Based on 155 reporting camps.) This growth is attributable both to the addition of the new camps and to increased numbers at existing camps.

Looking only at the 132 camps for which we have five years of data, we see steady growth. Total enrollment for these camps increased by 6% between 2010 to 2011 and then by 1% in each succeeding year. Sum total, they grew by 9% over the four-year period.

Same: As seen in Table 1, over half of the camps have grown over the years and a third have declined. The others served about the same number of campers in 2014 as they did in 2010 (within one percentage point).

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CAMPS GROWING OR DECLINING 2010 TO 2014

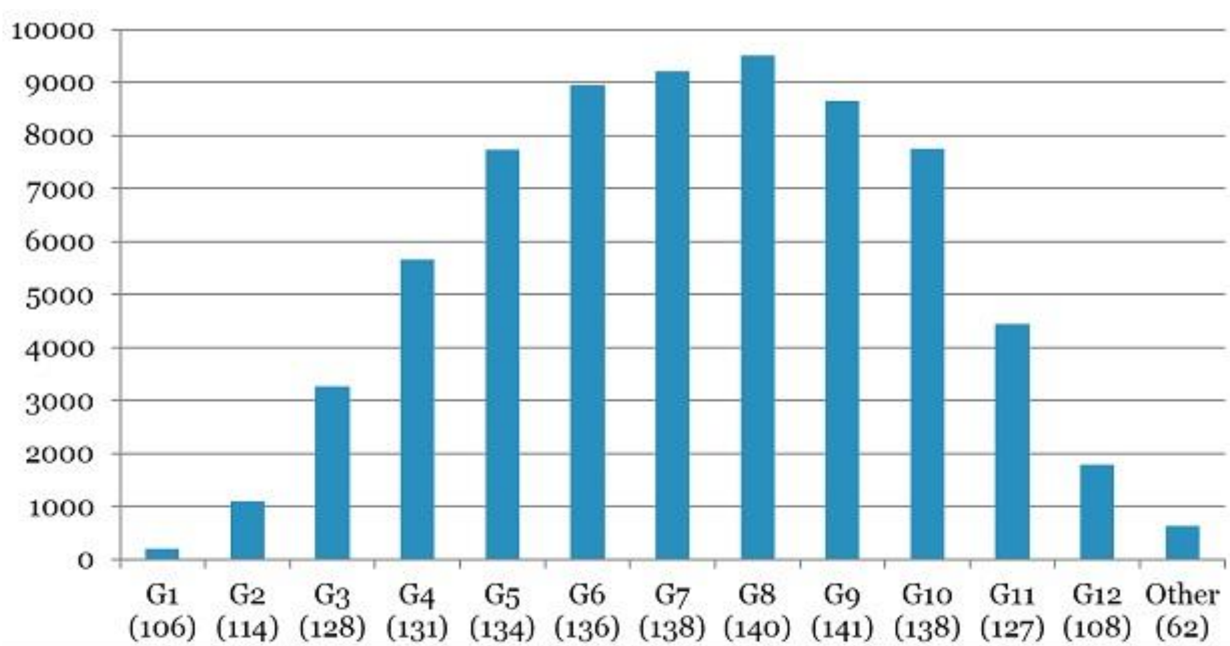
	Number	Percent
Grew	70	53%
Stable (-1% to +1%)	18	14%
Declined	44	33%
TOTAL	**132**	**100%**

Same: Camp enrollments continue to show a gender imbalance. In Summer 2014, 53% of campers were girls; 47% were boys. This gap is only marginally larger than it was the previous summer.

Same: Over 70% of the camps are co-ed, and over 70% of the campers attended one of these camps in Summer 2014. Another 14% of campers attended camps in which boys and girls are separated by program, space, or session, and 7% are at a camp where boys and girls are together or separate depending on age. The other 6% are in single-sex camps. These figures are virtually unchanged from Summer 2013.

Same: Camp enrollments continue to show a bell curve with 40% of campers in the middle-school years (entering grades 6 to 8). (See Figure 1.)

FIGURE 1: GRADE-BY-GRADE ENROLLMENT (2014)

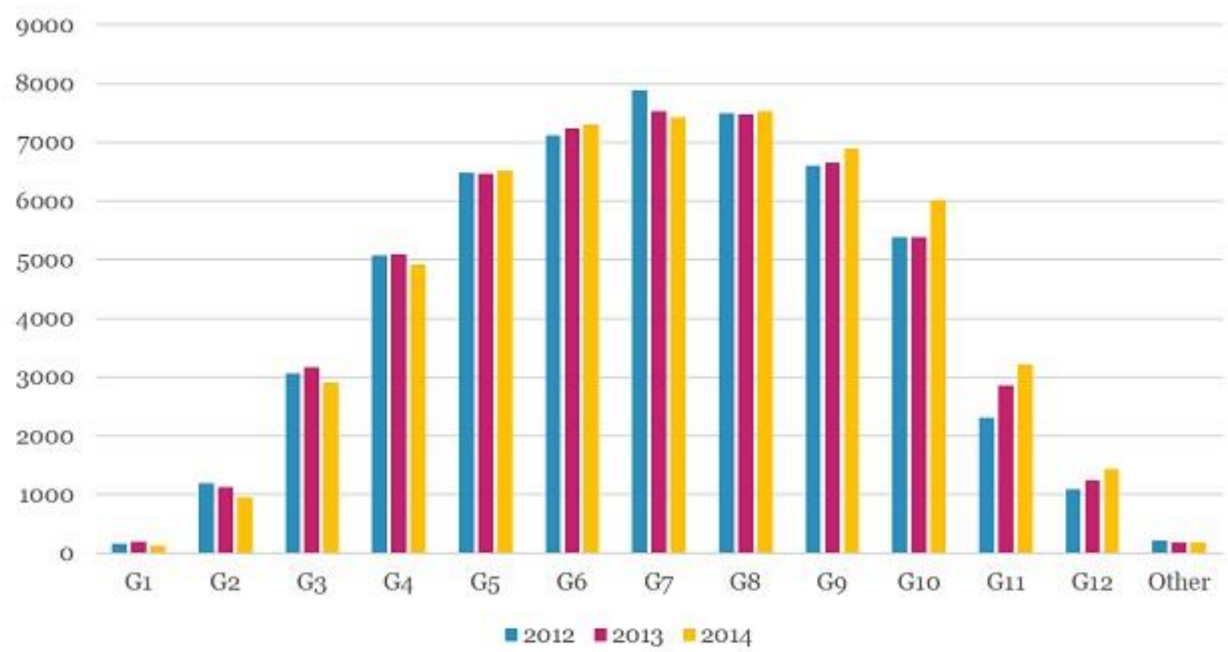


n = 146 camps. Number in parentheses is the number of camps serving this cohort.

Changed: About 20% of the campers in Summer 2014 were entering grades 10-12, slightly higher than the 17% reported in Summer 2013. At the same time, the number of camps offering programs for this age group has increased.

Figure 2 shows grade-by-grade trends for the 125 camps that have data for all years. Importantly, the figure shows the increase in older teen participation in camp over the past three years. In fact, with the exception of a slight uptick of 6th-graders, high schoolers are the only age group showing real growth.

FIGURE 2: GRADE-BY-GRADE ENROLLMENT 2012-2014



n = 125 matched sample camps

Region

Same: Camp location matters. Regions vary in terms of population base, competition (number and variety of camp options), economy, and lifestyle. The pattern is familiar. Over 40% of the camps are in the Northeast, where a comparable percentage of the Jewish population resides.[1] The rest of the camp world is dispersed fairly equally across the other regions, with the notable exception of the relatively small number of camps in the South. The number of campers mirrors the number of camps. Some 45% of all campers attended a camp in the Northeast in Summer 2014, far exceeding any other region of the continent. (See Table 2.)

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[1] For state breakouts of the Jewish population in the U.S. see ***www.brandeis.edu/ssri/pdfs/AmJewishPopAppB.pdf***.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF CAMPS AND CAMPERS BY REGION (IN DESCENDING ORDER BY NUMBER OF CAMPERS)

	Camps		Campers Served	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Northeast	65	42%	32,696	45%
Midwest	23	15%	11,669	16%
West	24	15%	10,880	15%
South	18	12%	10,243	14%
Canada	26	17%	7,965	11%
TOTAL	**156**	**101%**	**73,453**	**100%**

Total does not equal 100% due to rounding. Number of campers is based on 155 camps.

New: Camps in the Northeast and West have grown 15-16% over the past five years while camps in the Midwest grew only 2%. Camps in the South and in Canada were between these two extremes, with respective growth rates of 12% and 8%.

Camper Recruitment

New: Almost 18,700 campers were new to their camp in Summer 2014. On average, this represented 35% of a camp's total enrollment. Camps in the South and West had the highest percentage of new campers (Table 3). A high percentage of new campers can indicate that camps are doing a good job building enrollment from the ground up or it can indicate that they are not retaining their former campers and the incoming campers are thus a higher percentage of the total. (Based on 144 reporting camps.)

TABLE 3: NEW CAMPERS BY REGION OF CAMP (IN DESCENDING ORDER BY PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT)

Location of Camp	Number of camps	Sum of new campers	Average % of total enrollment
South	16	2,218	43%
West	23	3,666	42%
Northeast	57	7,393	36%
Midwest	22	3,175	30%
Canada	26	2,224	28%
Total	**144**	**18,676**	

Camper Retention

In Summer 2014, average retention rates for all campers was 73%. In other words, field-wide, almost three out of four campers who could return in Summer 2014 did so. First-time campers represent a certain effort and investment on the part of the camps, and the question of whether or not they retain them is an important one. In Summer 2014, the average return rate for first-time campers was only marginally less than overall retention rates (70% versus 73%).

We cannot say if these figures are in the category of "same" or "changed" because return rates in Summer 2014 were calculated differently than in previous years. Camps previously were asked to estimate the percentages returning. In 2014 JData switched to an actual calculation of retention based on total number eligible to return and total number returning. The 2014 formula will be used in future years, and the 2014 figures will serve as baseline.

New: Retention rates in the Northeast, Midwest, and South align with the overall average. Canada's rate is somewhat higher (79% retention), and the rate in the American West is somewhat lower (68% retention). It appears that the camper career in Canada is more enduring and less "fluid" than that of campers in the West. The West also does the least well in retaining new campers (65% retention).

New: Size also matters in terms of overall retention. The smallest camps have an average retention rate of only 55%, about twenty percentage points less than the other camps (74% medium; 75-76% large). Size matters less when it comes to the retention of new campers. The average in all size categories is within three percentage points of the overall 70% average.

Campers with Disabilities

New: Serving campers with disabilities and special needs is a strategic priority area for FJC. A new section added to the JData profile form gathered information on camps' work in this area in Summer 2014. This section was completed by 152 camps.

44% of the responding camps currently serve children with disabilities. "Serve" was defined as providing special programs, support, services, or accommodation above and beyond administration of medications. These camps served just over 3,000 campers.

Most of these camps follow a partial inclusion model. Most have an inclusion coordinator for summer only. Camps are more likely to accommodate intellectual, behavioral, and developmental disabilities than neurological or physical ones. At least half of the camps provide counseling and social skills training. Relatively few offer other forms of training and therapy (Table 4). See the ***article*** by Lisa Tobin of Foundation for Jewish Camp on what these numbers mean to FJC and its work to include more campers with disabilities.

TABLE 4: SERVICES FOR CAMPERS WITH DISABILITIES

	Number of camps reporting	Number Yes	Percent Yes
Program for disabilities			
Partial inclusion	52	31	60%
Other	49	26	53%
Vocational education	51	14	27%
Separate program	51	11	22%
Only serve children with disabilities	56	5	9%
Disabilities accommodated			
Intellectual	61	57	93%
Behavioral	60	56	93%
Developmental	60	54	90%
Neurological	53	40	75%
Physical	58	43	74%
Inclusion coordinator			
Summer only	54	31	57%
Year-round part-time	59	18	31%
Other	48	11	23%
Year-round fulltime	59	7	12%
Special services offered			
Counseling	55	31	56%
Social skills training	58	29	50%
Vocational training	55	18	33%
Academic support	54	14	26%
Occupational therapy	55	4	7%
Physical therapy	53	3	6%

Staff

Camps employed almost 18,000 staff members along with almost 2,000 summer-only volunteers in 2014.

Same: On average, summer-only staff accounted for 94% of all paid camp staff. Those with year-round fulltime positions are 4% of all paid staff. Those with year-round part-time positions are 2%. (Based on 136 reporting camps.)

Changed: On average, 52% of bunk counselors in Summer 2014 were new hires, up from 44% the previous year. Camps show a range from *no* returning counselors to *all* returning counselors. New bunk counselors bring new talent into the camp, but they also represent a cost to the camp in terms of identification, recruitment, hiring, training, and socializing into the culture and work of the camp. (Based on 113 reporting camps.)

New: On average, almost half of all paid staff are alumni of the camp. The 109 reporting camps have over 7,600 alumni on staff.

Same: On average, 7% of staff are Israelis (hired through JAFI and other agencies). Another 9%, on average, are other international staff.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Changed: Camps with data for both 2013 and 2014 show a 1% increase in average maximum weekly tuition, from $1,059 in 2013 to $1,075 in 2014. (Based on 96 camps.) At the same time, total operating expenses for these camps increased by 5%.

New: Revenue from tuition and fees covered about 86% of total operating expenses. There are great differences among camps. For 9% of the camps, tuition covers less than half of their expenses. For 31% of the camps, tuition yields excess revenue. (Based on 97 reporting camps.)

New: There is no single standard for how camps account for financial aid dollars. Half of the camps classify scholarship as an expense, and half see it as a reduction in tuition revenue. (Based on 110 responding camps.) In any event, total financial assistance disbursed in Summer 2014 topped $24.7M and helped over 26,000 campers attend Jewish camp. Note that financial assistance includes need-based aid as well as various discounts (for siblings, children of staff members, early-bird registration, referrals, etc.) and forms of tuition relief. On average 33% of a camp's participants received financial assistance. (Based on 101 reporting camps.)

Changed: Need-based financial aid appears to have grown in 2014. In the 77 camps that provided data in both 2013 and 2014, we see an increase of 9% in the total amount awarded (from an average of approximately $146,600 to $160,100) and an increase of 4% in the number of recipients (from an average of 113 to 117). From the perspective of the individual, this translated into a 5% increase in the average award, from $1,368 to $1,435.

Governance

Same: 82% of camps have a governing board or committee. As per best practices, most of these boards have one or more committees needed to get their work done (Table 5). Importantly, 80% of those responding have a development or fundraising committee. At the same time, very few require their board members to contribute financially to the camp.

TABLE 5: BOARD PRACTICES

	Number Reporting	Number Yes	Percent Yes
Committees			
development/fundraising	108	86	80%
facilities	107	73	68%
finance	100	66	66%
governance/leadership	105	64	61%
other	90	53	59%
alumni	105	56	53%
Board giving			
minimum gift requirement	103	21	20%

New: 87 camps had adequate information to calculate the percentage of board members contributing. Of these camps, 49% had contributions from *all* board members and 13% had contributions from *none* of their board members. The others ranged between these two extremes, resulting in an overall average of 73% of board members contributing.

New: Overall, having a gift requirement appears to make a difference in board giving. Camps with the requirement had an average compliance rate of 91%. Camps without the requirement had an average giving rate of 68%.

Development

Same: Most commonly, camps have a scholarship and an annual campaign (Table 6). The percentage of camps with each type of fund is essentially the same as it was in the previous year (see table). (Based on 129 reporting camps.)

TABLE 6: FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

	Percent Yes
Scholarship campaign (n = 126)	53%
Annual campaign (n = 127)	43%
Endowment (n = 126)	28%
Capital campaign (n = 124)	27%

Number in parentheses is the number of camps answering "yes" or "no."

New: According to JCamp 180, the desired norm is for camps to have all four campaigns operative. As seen in Table 7, there is much opportunity for growth in this regard.

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF CAMPAIGNS IN OPERATION

	Number of camps	Percent of camps
0 campaigns	41	32%
1 campaign	26	20%
2 campaigns	29	22%
3 campaigns	27	21%
4 campaigns	6	5%
TOTAL	129	100%

JData in Action: Foundation for Jewish Camp

Lisa Tobin contributes the second in an ongoing "JData in Action" series highlighting how JData is being put to good use by our Stakeholders.

A goal of the ***Foundation for Jewish Camp*** is to make the camp experience more inclusive of children with disabilities. Toward that end, FJC engaged ***Laszlo Strategies*** to map the existing services available to these children and to look at potential services that were desired. This was the first research of its kind in the Jewish community. FJC then developed a series of strategies to grow the field, and first steps began in the spring of 2014. With the help of JData, we enter the 2015 camp season with a more data-driven view of the field.

In 2014, we knew that campers with disabilities were underrepresented at Jewish camps relative to their percentage in the population (only 5% of the entire camper population were children with disabilities). We also knew that we needed more specific data. We needed more specific details about the services that each camp provides: the number of campers with disabilities, their staffing support for these campers, and other relevant information. In addition, we needed the camps to report the number of campers they each served, so that we could track the growth of the field.

We use these data in a variety of ways. FJC and our partner communities and synagogues receive calls throughout the year from families looking for camps for their children. The data we collect helps us direct parents to programs based on camper age, geographical location, religious preferences, accessibility needs, grade in school, and camper interests. When a family is looking for a vocational training program, we can quickly access the data to find the camps that are right for them.

The data allow us to quickly compile a list of camps across the country that serve children with disabilities and publicize that list in stories and advertisements for the public. We share the data among camps in order to create a network of peer-to-peer relationships between them. As the central advocate and support for disabilities initiatives, camps regularly contact FJC for help in making referrals and connections.

JData also helps FJC to build informative relationships with our supporters. Certain funders might be interested in partnering with us to serve a certain age group of campers, a certain region, or to focus on a particular type of disability or a specific project. The data enable us to look at numbers in terms of religious denominations in an effort to match campers with camps which reflect their religious purview.

Since FJC's 2014 strategic decision to provide leadership and advocacy in making camps more inclusive, JData reports have shown an increase not only in the number of children with disabilities attending Jewish camp but also in the number of camps serving these campers.

FJC is working to develop more options for children with disabilities to attend camp alongside their peers, within their local regions, and in camps that match their interests and family preferences. We are also working to increase the number of campers with disabilities to a percentage that reflects the 15% of the school-aged population of children with disabilities.

JData is helping us to see where our investments are making an impact, and where more work needs to be done. The field is moving forward, and the numbers are changing. Quantifying the field allows us to keep our fingers on the pulse of our camp partners and to remain dynamic and flexible in our approach, while responding to the needs of the community.

*Lisa Tobin is the Director of Disabilities Initiatives at the **Foundation For Jewish Camp**.*

News from JData

- Amy Sales contributed a piece to the **Network for Research in Jewish Education** Spring 2015 newsletter: "**Research Update from JData: Partnerships and the Power of Data**."
- The 2015 Jewish Nonprofit Overnight Camp Top Management Salary report is **now available**.
- **JCamp 180** Mentor Natasha Dresner points to JData's 2015 Jewish Nonprofit Overnight Camp Top Management Salary report as a "good starting point" for internal overnight camp salary conversations in "**Is Your Top Professional Salary Fair and Justifiable?**"
- On April 29, Amy Sales and Nicole Samuel presented the 2014 New York day camp data to camp directors, Federation leaders, and colleagues from **Foundation for Jewish Camp** and **JCC Association** assembled at **UJA-Federation of New York**.

JData is operated by Brandeis University with generous support from the Jim Joseph Foundation, the AVI CHAI Foundation, and JData's stakeholders.