

The Cost of Securing Jewish Schools Three Years After October 7, 2023

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A Report by the Teach Coalition Office of
Jewish Education Policy and Research

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Jewish School Security Expenditures 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December and January 2025, Teach Coalition surveyed its member schools to compare security spending in the 2025-2026 school year to their security spending three years prior, in 2022-2023. Our goal was to assess the impact of the October 7, 2023 attack against Israel on security spending in Jewish schools – and update an earlier similar study completed in 2025.

Based on responses from 63 schools enrolling 10% of all Jewish students in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida, we conclude that:

- **For the 22-23 School Year -**
 - The average respondent spent **\$179,467 annually (\$474/pupil)** on security.
 - Security spending comprised an average of **1.81% of respondents' annual budget.**
 - **48% of students were charged a security fee** in addition to tuition.
- **For the 25-26 School Year -**
 - The average respondent spent **\$401,432 annually (\$1,010/pupil)** on security.
 - That's an increase of **\$221,069 per school (\$536/pupil)**, or a **124% increase in average security spending** among respondents.
 - Security now comprises an average of **3.35% of respondents' annual budget.**
 - The average respondent's **security costs increased at 6x the rate of non-security expenses.**
 - **59% of students were charged a security fee** in addition to tuition.
- **Other Insights:**
 - **Security guards comprise 63% of security spending** by the average respondent.
 - **Larger schools generally spend more** on security, but **smaller schools spend more per pupil** and saw the sharpest increase in security costs.

With the average Jewish school now spending **\$401,432 annually – 3.35% of their budget** – to meet the basic need for security, these findings underscore the **pressing need for increased government security funding.**

1. INTRODUCTION.

Providing a secure learning environment is a core responsibility for all schools. Jewish nonpublic schools in particular face an array of threats from anti-Israel and anti-Semitic actors and feel this responsibility most acutely.

The challenge is only growing, particularly in the wake of the October 7th, 2023 attack upon Israel. In 2023, the FBI reported 11,862 hate crimes in the US - 100% higher than in 2013, when 5,928 incidents were reported. Attacks targeting Jews were the most common type of religiously-motivated hate crime for the 27th year in a row, accounting for 68% of religion-based crimes. The FBI reported 1,832 anti-Jewish incidents in 2023 - 63% more than in the prior year. According to the Anti-Defamation League, more than 10,000 anti-Semitic incidents occurred between October 7, 2023, and September 2024 – up from 3,325 incidents the prior year.

For over a decade, Teach Coalition, the state-level government advocacy arm of the Orthodox Union, has advocated successfully for state and local funding for Jewish schools. Public safety is the most fundamental responsibility of governments, so it is only appropriate that they help cover the high cost of securing our schools.

In January 2024, Teach Coalition released a study assessing Jewish schools' pre-October 7 planned security spending and their projected increases following the uptick in anti-Semitic incidents. In March 2025, Teach Coalition released a second study comparing actual security costs in the 2024-2025 school year to those in 2022-2023. That study found that the average schools security expenses increased by 84% over two years and at that time amounted to 3.09% of the average school's budget.

This study seeks to quantify the long-term impact of the October 7 attacks on schools by testing whether the increase in security spending seen in our 2025 study has persisted.

2. METHODOLOGY.

In February, Teach Coalition issued a survey to 215 member schools in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida to assess the burden of security spending on these schools.

The survey asked:

- Their 2022-2023 budget and security spending level;
- Their 2022-2023 school budget
- Their 2025-2026 security spending levels, broken down by guards, equipment, and capital expenses;
- Their 2025-2026 school budget;

- Their security fees levied on families in 2022-23;
- Their security fees levied upon families in 2025-2026;
- If they increased security fees or tuition to cover rising security costs; and
- Their unmet security needs.

Surveys were administered via Microsoft Forms and responses collected over an eight-week period from December 2025 through January 2026.

Student enrollment for each school was manually input by Teach Coalition staff, taken from 2022-2023 and 2025-26 enrollment reports provided by state education agencies. Analysis of survey responses was completed using Microsoft Excel.

3. RESPONSES.

63 schools responded to the surveys. The breakdown of responses by state and school size based on 2024-2025 enrollment is as follows:

- Breakdown by State:
 - **Florida** – 21 respondents
 - **New Jersey** – 10 respondents
 - **New York** – 25 respondents
 - **Pennsylvania** – 7 respondents
- Breakdown by School Size:
 - **Fewer than 100 Students** – 11 respondents
 - **100-300 Students** – 24 respondents
 - **300-500 Students** – 11 respondents
 - **500-1,000 Students** – 11 respondents
 - **Over 1,000 Students** – 6 respondents

Altogether, respondent schools enrolled 25,049 students in the 2024-2025 school year – 9.6% of the 260,133 students enrolled in Jewish schools in Florida (15,765), New York (172,673), New Jersey (67,585), and Pennsylvania (4,110).

4. FINDINGS.

4.1 Security Expenses in 2022-2023, Pre-Oct. 7.

The average Jewish school reported annual security expenditures of \$179,467 for the 2022-23 academic year. This number varied considerably by state, with a low of \$77,571 per school in Pennsylvania and a high of \$277,011 per school in New York.

Table 1 – Annual Security Spending by State, 2022-2023					
	Florida	New Jersey	New York	Pennsylvania	All States
Respondents	21	10	25	7	63
22-23 Enrollment	3,375	5,051	14,104	1,343	23,873
Average School Enrollment	161	505	564	192	379
Average Per School Security Spending	\$99,703	\$174,439	\$277,011	\$77,571	\$179,467
Average Per Pupil Security Spending	\$620	\$345	\$491	\$404	\$474

As we see in Table 1, the average security spending per pupil was \$474, with significant variation across states; per pupil spending in Florida was nearly twice the per pupil spending in New Jersey.

This variation is likely influenced by a combination of factors, including variations in average enrollment and cost of living.

Average school enrollment was lowest in Florida, followed by Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Due to the relatively inelastic nature of security spending, where each building incurs certain fixed expenses (e.g., a guard, an access control system, forced entry-resistant doors and windows), it is reasonable to expect smaller schools to have higher per pupil security costs. This may explain why Florida has the highest average per pupil security spending, but relatively low per school expenditures.

Table 2 – Annual Security Spending by School Size, 2022-23						
	<100 Students	100-299 Students	300-499 Students	500-1,000 Students	>1,000 Students	All Schools
Respondents	11	24	11	11	6	63
22-23 Total Enrollment	412	3,730	3,839	7,477	8,415	23,873
Average Per School Security Spending	\$36,545	\$91,828	\$219,821	\$309,010	\$480,567	\$179,467
Average Per Pupil Security Spending	\$976	\$591	\$630	\$455	\$343	\$474

Indeed, Table 2 shows that the smallest schools – those with fewer than 100 students – had the lowest per-school security expenditure (\$36,545) of any category, but the highest per-pupil security expenditure (\$976). As school size increases, average per-school security expenditures rise while per pupil security expenditures fall.

4.2 Increased Security Expenses in 2025-2026, Post-Oct. 7.

Among schools reporting both their 2022-2023 and 2025-26 security spending, the average school increased their annual security spending by \$221,996 over three years – an average of 124% increase from Pre-Oct. 7 security expenditures.

Table 3 – Increase in Security Spending, by State					
	Florida	New Jersey	New York	Pennsylvania	All States
Respondents	21	10	25	7	63
24-25 Enrollment	4,173	5,197	14,424	1,255	25,049
Average Per School Spending	\$300,470	\$403,000	\$538,853	\$211,294	\$401,432
Increase in Average Per School Spending*	+\$200,767 (+201%)	\$228,561 (+131%)	\$261,842 (+95%)	\$133,723 (+172%)	\$221,966 (+124%)
Average Per Pupil Spending	\$1,512	\$775	\$934	\$1,179	\$1,010
Increase in Average Per Pupil Spending*	\$892 (+144%)	\$430 (+125%)	\$443 (+90%)	\$774 (+191%)	\$536 (+113%)

*Compared to the same figure for the 2022-2023 school year.

Spending increases also varied considerably by state and school size. Consistent with our earlier findings of 2022-2023, the highest total increase per school was found in schools with over 1,000 pupils and the highest increase per pupil was found in schools with under 100 pupils.

Table 4 – Increase in Security Spending, by School Size						
	<100 Students	100-299 Students	300-499 Students	500-1,000 Students	>1,000 Students	All Schools
Respondents	11	24	11	11	6	63
24-25 Enrollment	588	4,039	3,975	7,844	8,603	25,049
Avg. Per School Security Spending	\$141,097	\$303,750	\$450,671	\$623,091	\$772,799	\$401,432
Increase in Avg. Per School Security Spending	\$104,551 (+286%)	\$211,922 (+231%)	\$230,851 (+105%)	\$314,080 (+102%)	\$292,231 (+61%)	\$221,966 (+124%)
Avg. Per Pupil Security Spending	\$2,640	\$1,805	\$1,247	\$874	\$539	\$1,010
Increase in Average Per Pupil Spending	\$1,664 (+171%)	\$1,214 (+205%)	\$617 (+98%)	\$419 (+92%)	\$196 (+57%)	\$536 (+113%)

4.3 Increased Student Security Fees Post-Oct. 7.

Our survey asked all schools if they charged a security fee in addition to tuition in both 2022-23 and 2025-26

We found that in 2022-2023, 48% of students were charged a security fee. This increased to 59% in the 2025-26 school year.

We asked New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania schools

the size of their security fee and whether they increased tuition to cover security expenses. Among those charging a fee, the average fee – weighting for student enrollment – was \$422 per student in 2022-23 and increased an average of \$1 per student to \$423.

An additional seven schools enrolling 14% of students among respondent schools reported increasing tuition to cover security spending.

In total, by the 2025-2026 school 78% of students covered by our survey were either charged a security fee or paid increased tuition directly tied to rising security costs – roughly double the number paying a security fee in 2022-2023.

	2022-2023 School Year	2025-2026 School Year	Increase
Respondents	63	63	--
Number of Schools Charging Security Fee	30	37	+7
Percentage of Students Charged Security Fee	48%	59%	+11%
Average Security Fee¹	\$422	\$423 ²	+\$1

4.4 Breakdown of Security Expenses.

Our survey of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania asked schools their spending levels on different categories of security costs in the 2025-2026 school year.

These varied widely from school to school, but in general the largest spending category was security guards, comprising 63% of overall security spending.

Next came capital improvements (e.g. walls, doors, windows) at 23% of all security spending, followed by security equipment (e.g. radios, surveillance cameras) at 13% of overall spending.

¹ This reflects the average security fee only among those charging a security fee. Some schools charge security fees per family while others charge per student. For comparability, we assume each family has two children enrolled in a school.

² Three schools with combined enrollment of 3,985 students began charging security fees of under \$150 per pupil in 2025-26 – a relatively low outlier. Excluding these schools, the average security fee in 2025-2026 is \$543.

4.5 Impact of Security Spending on School Budgets.

Our survey also asked schools for their 2022-23 and 2025-2026 general budgets. The purpose was to gauge what percentage of Jewish school spending is allocated to security costs, and the rate of increase in security costs compared to overall school costs.

Table 6 illustrates the rate of increase in non-security spending compared to security spending. Respondents reported an aggregate of \$11.3 million in security spending in 2022-23 – or 1.81% of their total budget. By 2025-2026, aggregate security spending among respondents reached \$25.3 million – or 3.35% of their total budget.

Table 6 – Security Spending vs. Other Spending		
2022-23 School Year	Total Non-Security Budget	\$623,453,300
	Total Security Budget	\$11,306,410
	Proportion of Budget Spent on Security	1.81%
2025-26 School Year	Total Non-Security Budget	\$755,767,270
	Total Security Budget	\$25,290,237
	Proportion of Budget Spent on Security	3.35%
Rate of Increase	Rate of Increase in Non-Security Spending	19%
	Rate of Increase in Security Spending	124%

In the past two years, non-security spending in the Jewish schools we surveyed increased by 19%, while security spending increased by 124% - meaning that security costs grew 6 times as fast as other school expenses.

5. LIMITATIONS.

This study relies on survey data from Teach Coalition member schools in Florida, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania who responded to our surveys. Security spending patterns among Teach Coalition member schools may differ from those of the broader Jewish school population to an unknown extent.

Moreover, responses were received from 63 of the 215 Teach Coalition member schools in Florida, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Since responding to the survey was optional, there may be an unknown amount of selection bias in the results.

The survey directions were clear that all security expenses should be included in security spending – including state or local security funding for nonpublic schools. However, it is possible schools excluded monies reimbursed through grants or entitlement funding. Therefore, it is possible some schools may be underreporting the amount they spend on security.

Finally, survey responses were self-reported and could not be independently verified.

As a result of these limitations, care should be taken when extrapolating from these survey responses to the state of security spending for Jewish schools as a whole. However, since this is the largest survey analyzing pre- and post-October 7th Jewish school security spending – and overall findings regarding 2022-2023 expenses are remarkably close to the finding in our 2025 security expenditure report despite a different school sample – this survey provides the best available data on current security spending in Jewish schools.

6. CONCLUSION.

Providing a safe learning environment is a costly challenge for Jewish day schools across the country. This has only become more challenging after the tragic attacks on October 7 and the ensuing nationwide increase in anti-Semitic incidents. Based on the responses from our surveys, the average Jewish school is now spending over \$400,000 annually – or over \$1,000 per pupil – on security. This burden is felt most acutely by the smallest schools, where fixed security costs are spread among the fewest students.

And this is only one aspect of the challenge facing schools. The financial costs of securing a school discussed in this report – while very substantial, as we have seen – cannot fully capture the toll that rising hate and visibly enhanced security measures take on faculty and students in Jewish schools.

These rising costs underscore the responsibility of federal, state, and local governments to enhance the protection afforded to Jewish schools and other at-risk institutions, particularly by ramping up security funding for our schools.

If the government entities responsible for public safety do not assume this substantial burden, then it will fall solely upon the shoulders of families already buckling under the weight of Jewish school tuition.

ABOUT TEACH COALITION.

Teach Coalition, a division of the Orthodox Union, is the leading national advocacy organization working to ensure Jewish families have access to safe, high quality, and affordable Jewish education. Founded in 2013, Teach Coalition advocates for equitable government funding and policies that support yeshivas and Jewish day schools, including security, STEM education, scholarships, meals, transportation, and other essential services. Through policy advocacy, research, and grassroots engagement, Teach Coalition works to strengthen support for nonpublic school students and families. Today, Teach Coalition serves communities representing over 90% of Jewish day school students nationwide across New York, New Jersey, California, Florida, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS.

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