

“Don’t underestimate  
your impact!”



School Leaders’  
Experiences Building  
Cultures of Belonging  
with Support from

**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools












**Research, analysis, and reporting conducted by  
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**TIYUV**

JOC-LED CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE  
EVALUATION

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# Introduction

Over the past 4 years, Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools has been steadfast in supporting Jewish Day School leaders as they endeavor to cultivate and deepen their school's culture of belonging. Prizmah leadership is committed to deepening their understanding of these efforts, extracting valuable insights and lessons to not only inform their practices, but also to share this wealth of knowledge with the broader educational community.

In service to this work, Prizmah engaged Tiyuv in a collaborative research process to better understand how school leaders and other community members navigated the work of culture change within their schools. Through conversations with Prizmah stakeholders, a survey of the broader community of day schools that have partnered with Prizmah, and in-depth focus groups with 5 select cultures of belonging partner schools, this study surfaced key themes and trends in how schools do this work.

This report presents the varied ways that people, programs, practices, policies, and philosophies of these schools were impacted throughout these partnerships, some which were short, and some which were more sustained. It is intended that this document can then be applied as a learning tool or guiding resource for other Prizmah schools working to strengthen and enrich their school communities.

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## Study Design

Tiyuv טיבוב envisioned and carried out a 4-part research process to tell the story of Prizmah-affiliated schools' efforts to cultivate and deepen their culture of belonging. Between May and October 2024 Tiyuv consultants engaged Prizmah and school stakeholders in the following–



**Document Review:** A review of all pertinent documents related to the work of both Prizmah and the schools involved in this work, including: program planning materials, curricular materials, reports generated by Prizmah and by the schools, internal communications, etc. to provide context and inform the design of the research instruments.



**Contextualizing Conversations:** Structured conversations with Prizmah leadership to refine the project work plan, and inform the process of engaging with and learning from Prizmah schools engaged throughout the duration of the project.



**Survey of School Leaders and Staff:** Based on insights gained from contextualizing conversations and document review, a robust survey of school professionals across all schools that have participated in or been impacted by Prizmah's Cultures of Belonging work.



**Focus Groups with Select Schools:** Five exemplar schools were selected to complete 90-minute focus groups with 4-5 representatives from each school, to provide valuable case studies of how Jewish Day Schools are taking action to develop a culture of belonging.

# Research Methods

In 2024, Tiyuv designed a survey for Jewish Day School leaders to better understand how they navigated working to build and nurture a culture of belong in their school with the support of Prizmah resources. The goals of the survey were to:

- Gain a better understanding how Jewish day schools and yeshivas participating in Prizmah's Cultures of Belonging work have experienced their efforts;
- Give school leaders an opportunity to provide feedback on the interventions, resources, and other supports provided by Prizmah during their partnership;
- Put survey findings in conversation with learnings from Focus Groups conducted with a select group of representatives from schools engaged in this work; and
- Showcase learnings in an accessible resource that can help inform the strategy of other Jewish day school and yeshiva communities seeking to engage in similar work.

The survey was comprised of 35 qualitative and qualitative questions about: school composition, location, and denomination; personal definition of a Culture of Belonging; the context and nature of the collaboration with Prizmah; how working with Prizmah influenced the school community, both materially and perceptually; and questions about individual demographics. Questions were written to align with the 5-P model of understanding the culture of a community: *Programming* (new projects, programs, and initiatives that have emerged from the work); *Policies* (existing and emergent strategy and theory underlying practices); *Practices* (actions representing the stage of overall implementation of culture/institutional change); *People* (who are the school-level stakeholders and major players? How has Prizmah leadership and support played a role?); and *Philosophy* (how schools articulate what belonging means), all towards their ongoing needs for deepening and evolving these efforts.

The survey was sent out to 148 staff members at 65 schools that partnered with Prizmah on Cultures of Belonging work at any point and in any capacity between 2020 and 2024. The survey, was open for 2 weeks between 8/26/2024 and 9/10/2024. The survey was initiated a total of 41 times. Of those, 25 respondents completed the survey. This summary reflects the responses from those 25 individuals, who represent 20 Jewish day schools across the United States.

Five focus groups were conducted with five schools within the Prizmah network between August to October, 2024. Each of these focus groups consisted of 4-5 key interest holders within a single school; including administrators, teachers/staff, and parents. A total of 23 people participated in these focus groups (see Appendix A for details). All focus groups were 90 minutes, and were guided by a semi-structured focus group protocol developed by the research team prior to implementation. All were conducted virtually, using Zoom video conferencing technology. Recordings of the focus groups were used to create audio transcripts of these in-depth conversations, which were then used to conduct the qualitative analysis included in this report.

The quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics for all demographic and substantively relevant items. Qualitative analysis was completed using Thematic Content Analysis, which guided the identification of important codes within the narrative language of each transcribed focus group. These codes were then reviewed, categorized and refined to reveal the primary themes that emerged from these conversations, which are described in this report.

# Study Participants

## Survey

Surveys were completed by 25 school community members representing 20 distinct schools out of the 65 affiliate schools that worked with Prizmah between 2020 and 2024.

### People



**Race:** Most respondents (74%) were white and some were Hispanic/Latinx (9%), while 14% selected 2 or more races.

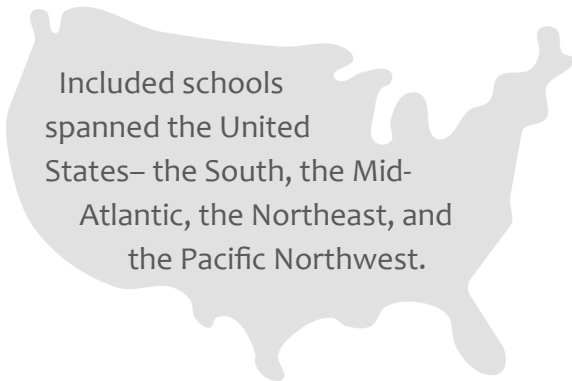
**Gender:** Nearly two thirds (64%) were women; the rest were men.

**Jewish Identity:** Nearly all were Jewish; only one was not.

No respondents were LGBTQ.

Very few respondents reported illness, disability, or neurodivergence.

## Focus Groups



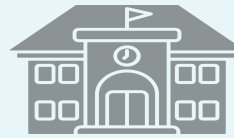
Included schools spanned the United States– the South, the Mid-Atlantic, the Northeast, and the Pacific Northwest.

Of the 23 focus group participants, 16 were women (70%), 6 were men (26%), and 1 identified as nonbinary (4%). Participants did not identify their race or age during these conversations.

Across the 5 schools, focus group participants held a variety of overlapping roles within their schools. Most participants (7) held a director-level role, such as an administrative or academic subject area. Other roles represented included principal (4), head of school (4), educator (3), parent (2), board member (2), and counselor (2).

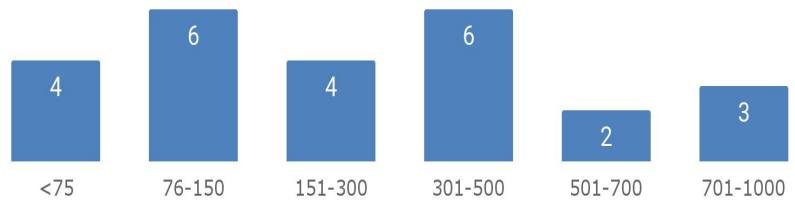
Schools ranged in size from very small (75 or fewer students) to very large (701-1000 students)

### Schools



**School Type:** More than half of respondents (52%) describe their school as Community/ Non-Denominational; five were Modern Orthodox and four were Pluralistic.

**School Size:** Schools ranged in size, from small to large.



Number of Students

**School Roles:** More than half of respondents (56%) were principals or heads of their school; the remainder were teachers, assistant principals, deans, or other school staff.

**Participation Years:** Four schools have participated in all school years since the work began. One participated three of the years. Two participated two of the years. Most respondents' schools participated only one year.

2020-2021    2021-2022    2022-2023    2023-2024

8

9

5

15

# Survey Results Overview

The survey was created to gain a broad view of how schools and school leaders are entering into, navigating, and then implementing their learnings when it comes to what marks a culture of belonging, what supports are needed to do this work in disparate school settings, and how these efforts have impacted various members of the school community, as well as policies and practices. Those findings are summarized here.

## Defining a “culture of belonging” (page 7)

- School leaders emphasized their desire to cultivate an environment where all members of the community—staff, students, and even their families—can bring their whole selves, and where these values are also infused into policy, practice, and curriculum.

## Prizmah Engagement (page 8)

- Prizmah primarily played the part of facilitator for these school communities, providing them resources (financial, human, material) to help them not only expand their learning, but also take meaningful action towards creating and sustaining cultures of belonging, however they understood that.
- School leaders reported that Prizmah support primarily came in the form of workshops for students and teachers, as well as guidance on evaluating how the vision/mission of a school aligns with the goal of cultivating and nourishing a culture of belonging in the school.
- Feedback suggests there is still a need for more depth of engagement with faculty and the broader school community. In addition, there is still a gap when it comes to what actions are being taken as a result of the ongoing learning on these topics.

## School Culture (pages 9 and 10)

- Interestingly, most school leaders report that students are given education and resources about creating and nurturing a culture of belonging and are held accountable for contradictory behavior, but are not given as many opportunities to improve skills or demonstrate leadership.
- Teachers, on the other hand, are encouraged to participate and lead, but are not given adequate resources or held accountable when they misstep.
- For both groups, school leaders reported that they are least likely to receive recognition for their participation and efforts.
- School leaders did share a range of challenges they faced in navigating efforts to do this work in their schools; the number one challenge was buy-in from parents, and occasionally other members of the school community. This is a possible site for further intervention and support from Prizmah.

## Mission and Vision (page 11)

- As of being surveyed, just over a third of school leaders reported that their school’s mission/vision statement explicitly references creating a culture of belonging.
- Just over a quarter of school leaders reported that working with Prizmah led to changes to the schools’ mission/vision statement.

## Cultures of Belonging Impact (pages 12 to 15)

- According to school leaders surveyed, the most positive impacts start at the student level.
- School leaders reported overall positive impacts of changes on students and teachers, but were somewhat less confident when it came to students and teachers of color or holding other marginalized identities, signaling an opportunity for more within-school community dialog and creating opportunities to get feedback on initiatives from students and teachers themselves. More attention was placed on programmatic changes than on policy changes.
- Neurodiversity and socioeconomic class were the two most common identity areas schools focused on when it came to increasing representation.
- Some of the tangible outcomes of this work included workshops for staff and changes to curricular and library materials, changes to recruitment and admissions policies, and creating gender neutral bathrooms.

# Survey Results

What a "Culture of Belonging" means to the school leaders who shared their voices on the survey:

To us, creating a Culture of Belonging means that all of our students and staff feel seen, appreciated, and connected to our school, and valued for their strengths and contributions to the whole.

Our students and staff are encouraged to be positive self-advocates, encouraged to share their ideas, observations, and suggestions to help our school be the best it can be.

Culture of Belonging means that everyone at our schools feels accepted and loved for who they are.

It means expanding the kids' definition of what it means to be Jewish. It means exploring different Jewish identities and practices that are not obvious to our students.

That each of our students and families feels free to be fully themselves and sees themselves reflected in our programming, rituals, curriculum and culture. It is a practice rather than an end product.

As a community school, we want to make sure that we create a culture where every member of our Jewish community feels welcome.

While this is true in our diverse student body, we also want to create a culture of belonging for our staff.

We honor the dignity and self worth of each person. Our core Jewish value of Belonging/Shayachut guides our work in building empathy and valuing difference. We live this value daily in our curriculum, programming, admissions, hiring, professional development, and dialogue with our broader community.

We envision a world in which all children and families are welcomed into the Jewish community as their full and authentic selves; where each of us believe that our unique stories are integral, belong, and are reflected in the rich and beautiful mosaic of the Jewish people.

A Culture of Belonging means cultivating community norms that encourage areivut, understanding of personal and social identity as well as awareness of the experiences and perspectives of others, and kavod, respectful engagement and interaction.

By consistently treating others with such dignity, over time those community members who are minoritized or have been marginalized come to feel a sense of comfort and security in the community, come to feel the community as their own. As the majority becomes more comfortable with the discomfort of difference, the minority can experience more of the "dignity" of that difference and the community benefits from a greater feeling of gabbush.

# Survey Results

## Prizmah Engagement

Schools primarily used Prizmah as an educational provider (32%) or are working with a consultant paid by Prizmah (24%).

Others received microgrants, hired outside educators, accessed print resources, or hosted presentations.

Just over a third (36%) said this work was made possible by available funding.

One fifth (20%) said that teachers called for action in this area.

The vast majority of respondents said they began this work out of...

**“a desire to expand learning on this topic”**

72%

and

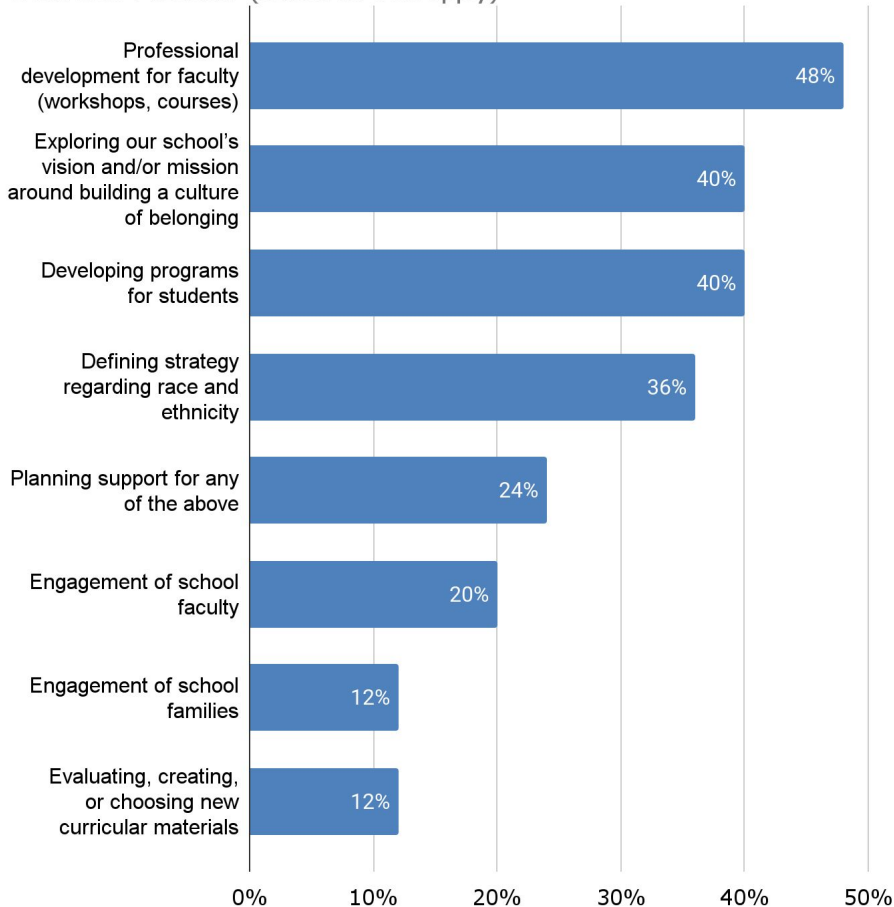
**“a desire to take action on this topic”**

76%

This work mostly engaged:

- Senior Administrators (72%)
- Teachers (68%)
- Division Leaders (60%)

Which types of support did your school receive through your work with Prizmah? (Select all that apply)



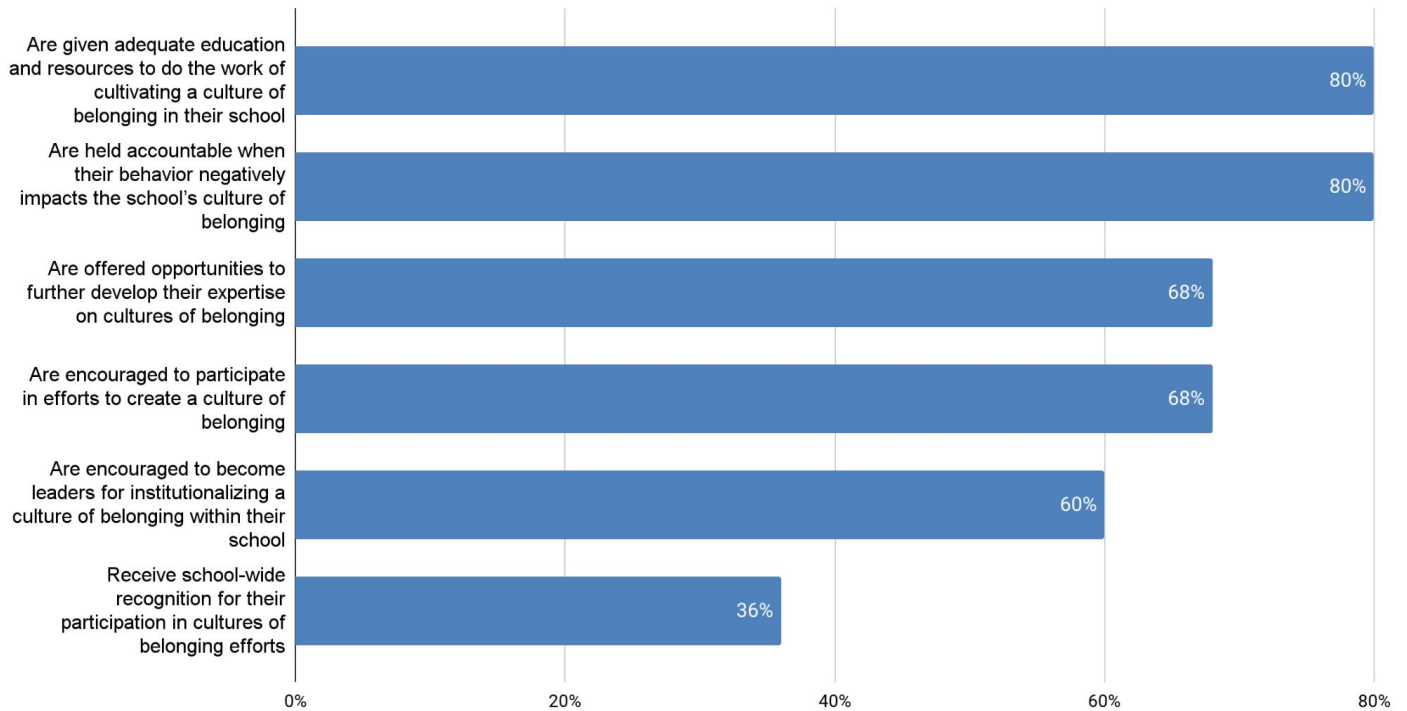
*The program we developed with the funds from the microgrant we received from Prizmah sought to draw in other schools as well. The themes of communal experience did not always resonate as much for other schools as they did for ours.*

# Survey Results

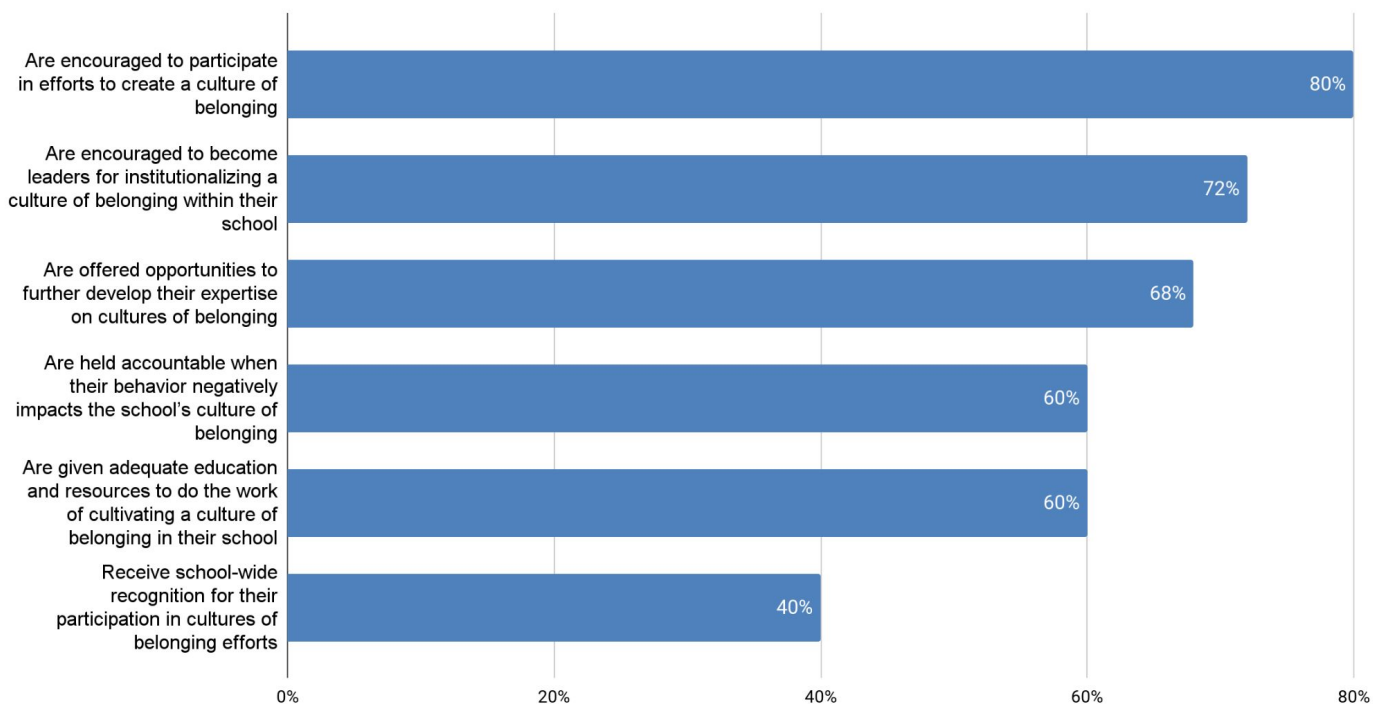
## School Culture

When asked: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how your school supports a Culture of Belonging?” school leaders said:

### Students...



### Teachers...



# Survey Results

## School Culture

Most respondents agree that their schools have a supportive and welcoming culture. As school leaders, this is a self-assessment from respondents and may not reflect the feelings of other members of the school community.

School leaders made their priorities clear. When asked what they think about their school community, including faculty, families, and students, the most endorsed (agree, strongly agree) statement was:

*“Student perspectives are consistently valued”*

84%

Some school leaders expressed challenges when it came to program buy-in from community, parents, and administration.

*There is such a spectrum in beliefs and opinions of our families*

*There are some families who have challenged the efficacy and need for diversity, equity, and inclusion work.*

*Given the political diversity of our community, it will always be a challenge to pursue this work without concerns about indoctrination and DEI, specifically.*

*With a head of school transition, the board pumped the brakes, and decided we needed to hold off on the originally planned work until our new head of school was onboard, and take this work up to the mission and values level.*

*When focusing on one specific marginalized group- others worry they will be left out. Constantly reminding everyone there is room for all of us!*

*It's hard to change the system and make this important to everyone*

*Because our pluralist community is almost 50/50 divided, in the first years of this work, a handful of parents expressed pushback as they felt this work was "indoctrinating" their children, particularly with respect to LGBTQ identity, or "guilt-tripping" their children about their socio-economic status. The supportive parents tended to reach out quietly to express their gratitude.*

Others described logistical and practical obstacles.

*It is difficult to discuss some diversity issues effectively if most/all of the group is not diverse. (We have a lot of white people in positions of power/influence, which means sometimes the leadership group can have blind spots.)*

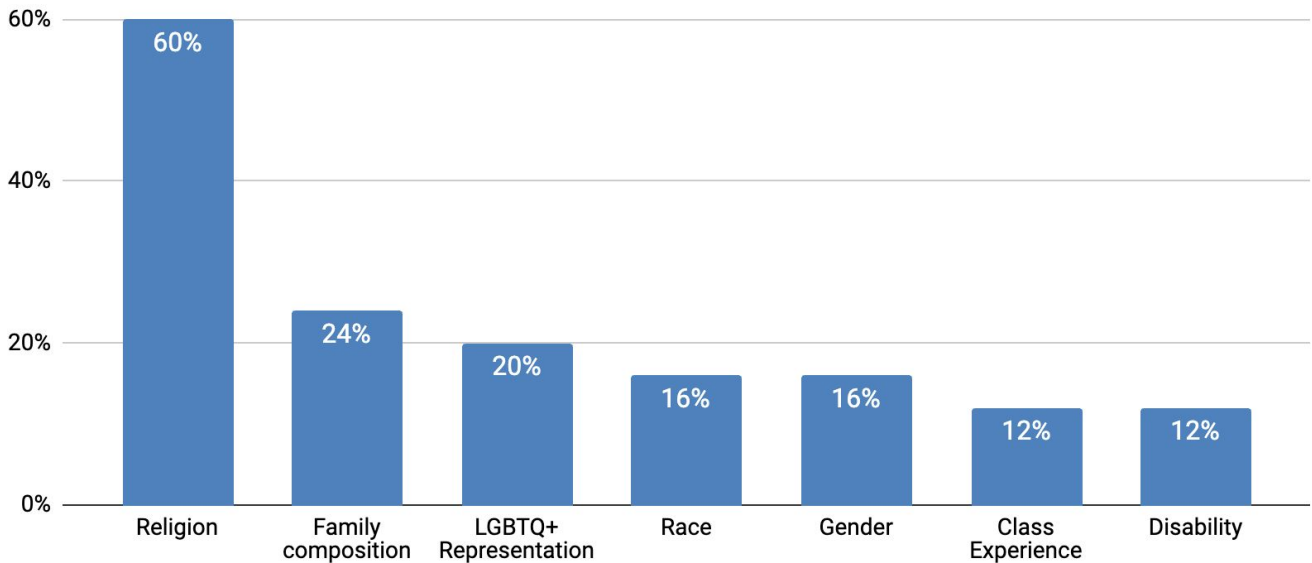
*Knowing that we can't tackle everything at once and that the work is vast. We found it important to work in smaller groups in particular areas related to inclusion (broadly), and more specifically related to pedagogy with regard to inquiry. We will get there and are grateful for the support that is helping us along the way.*

# Survey Results

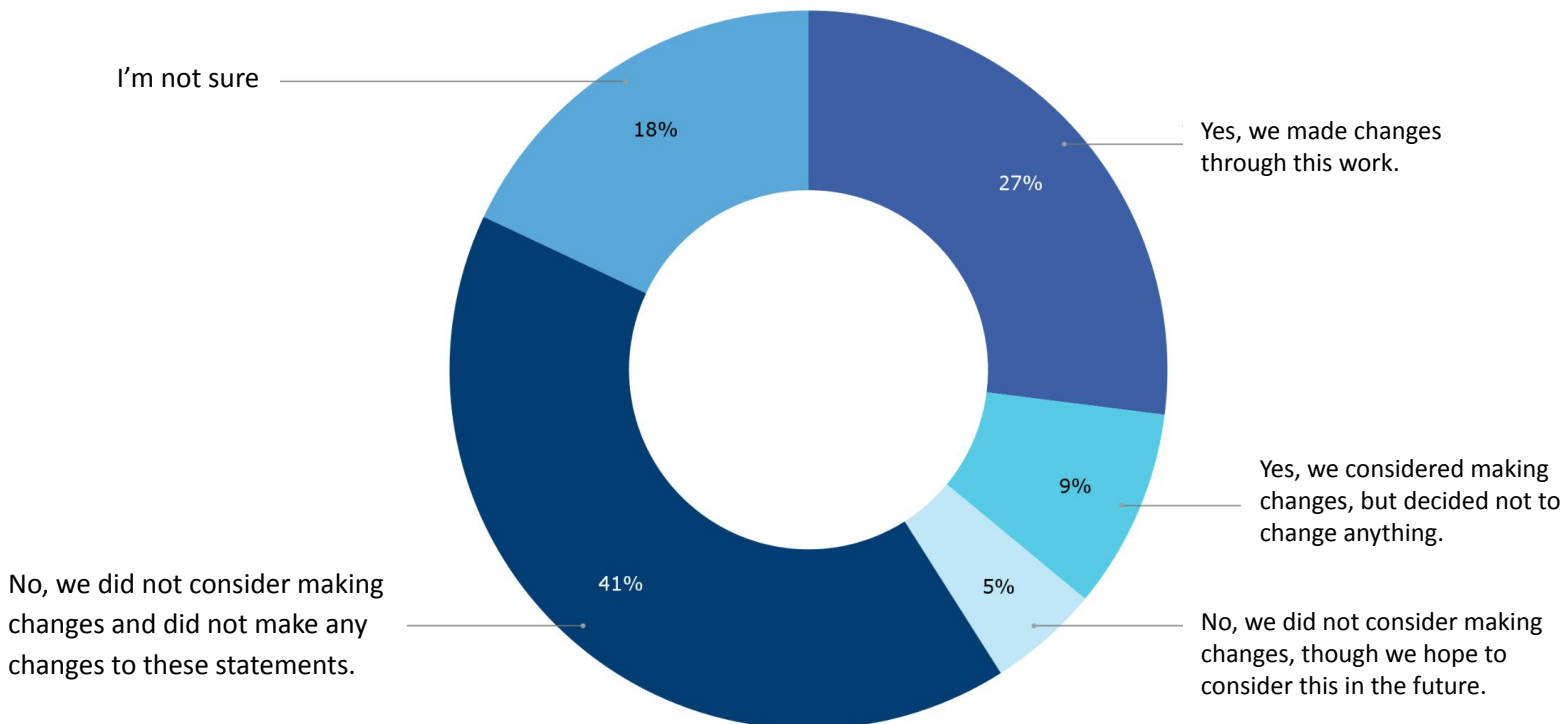
## Mission and Vision

Just over a third (36%) of school's mission and/or values statement(s) explicitly included a commitment to building a Culture of Belonging.

Does this statement reference any of the following? (Select all that apply)



Did your leadership consider making changes to its mission and/or values statement(s) through your Culture of Belonging work?



# Survey Results

## Cultures of Belonging Impact

According to respondents, since working with Prizmah, schools have implemented policy changes relating to onboarding (32%) and non-discrimination (28%). When asked what is something that their school community did in their efforts to nurture a Culture of Belonging that makes them proud, leaders said:

*I was incredibly proud of my leadership team and board for starting the essential conversation of creating a culture of belonging with the backdrop of Florida.*

*We have been intentional in family composition as part of our recruitment and potential family programming.*

*We dived deep into consideration of our school's religious policies -- with surveys, ad hoc conversations, and formal Board discussion. This resulted in some significant and very well received policy shifts. Core to our most recent Strategic Plan work were matters related to pluralism and belonging. This influence refreshes of our Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Ed Philo statements, including strong emphasis on themes related to sustaining a culture of belonging.*

*Our regional association is one that places a very high emphasis on DEI work, and it sometimes does so in ways that place emphasis on particular kinds of diversity. In our very recent reaccreditation, the Visiting Team singled out of school for "major commendation" for its commitment to pluralism and inclusivity. We felt great that they recognized how deep our commitments are, even though by some narrow metrics, we are not diverse in the way the Association emphasizes.*

*An admissions grant initiative to increase racial diversity.*

*By providing books for our middle school library that show diverse characters and experiences, we are helping our student both to feel seen and to gain a greater understanding of others in our community.*

*In Nebraska, we are in a politically conservative environment and we work incredibly hard to implement a culture of belonging without alienating stakeholders (parents and donors) who may not see a need for this important work.*

*Increased awareness of how many factors outside of school life can impact student performance and well being. We do a better job now of seeing the whole child.*

*Our main workshop was on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. We have had both teachers and parents talk about how seen they feel in our school--a bit from policy changes, and even more through some (to us, normal) ways of talking about families. All these point to success with our desire for a culture of belonging.*

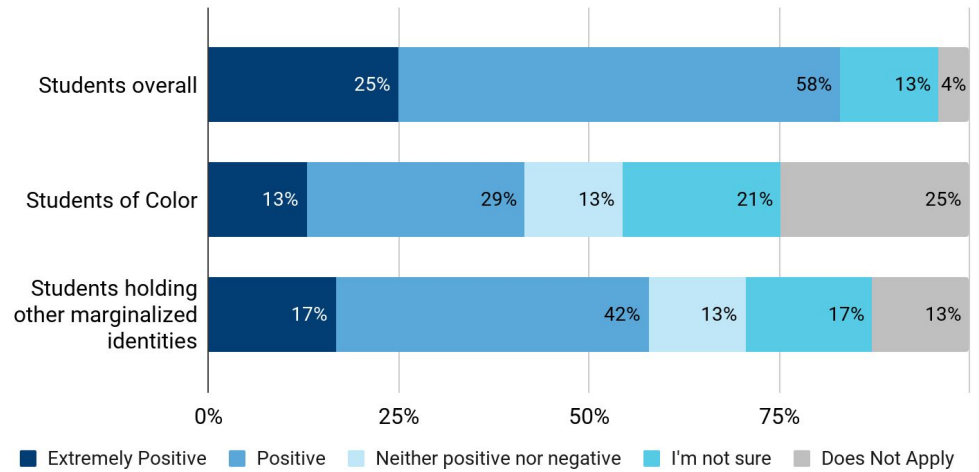
*We created gender-neutral bathrooms.*

# Survey Results

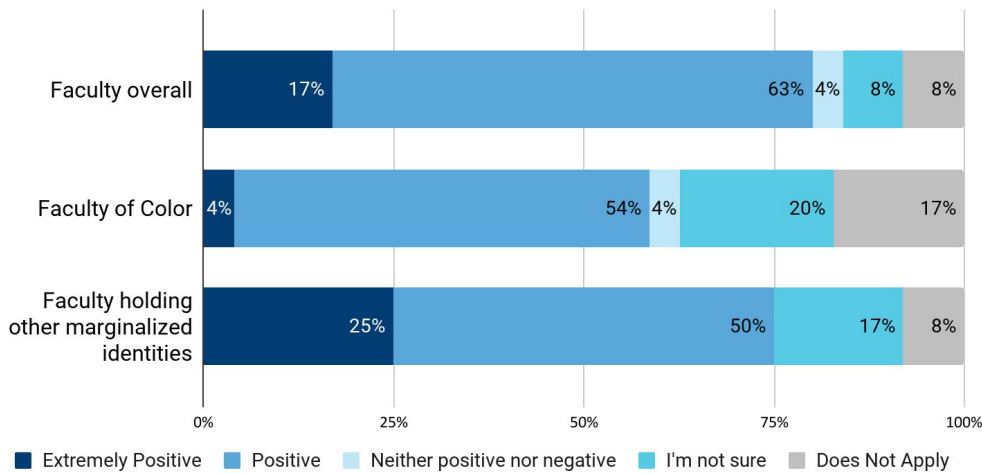
## Cultures of Belonging Impact – Programs

When thinking about the **programs** their school adopted towards building a stronger culture of belonging, respondents described the following impact on various school community members-

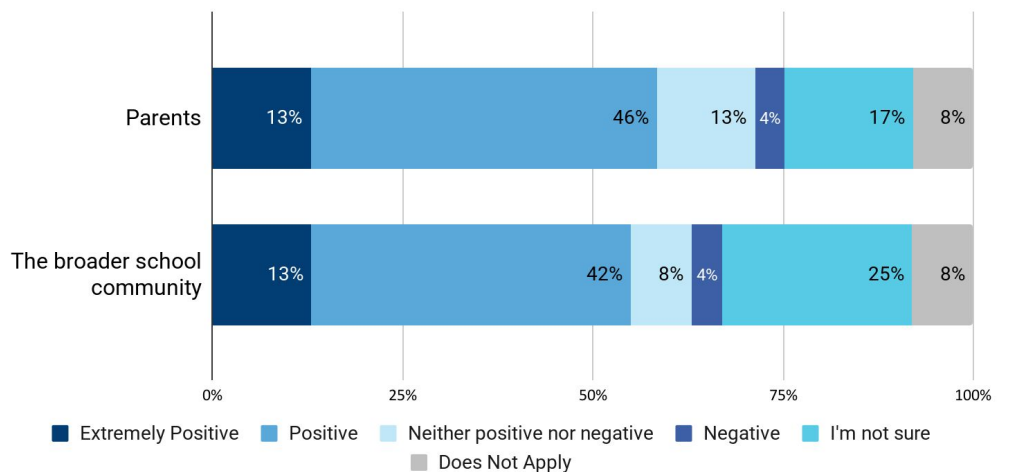
### Students



### Faculty



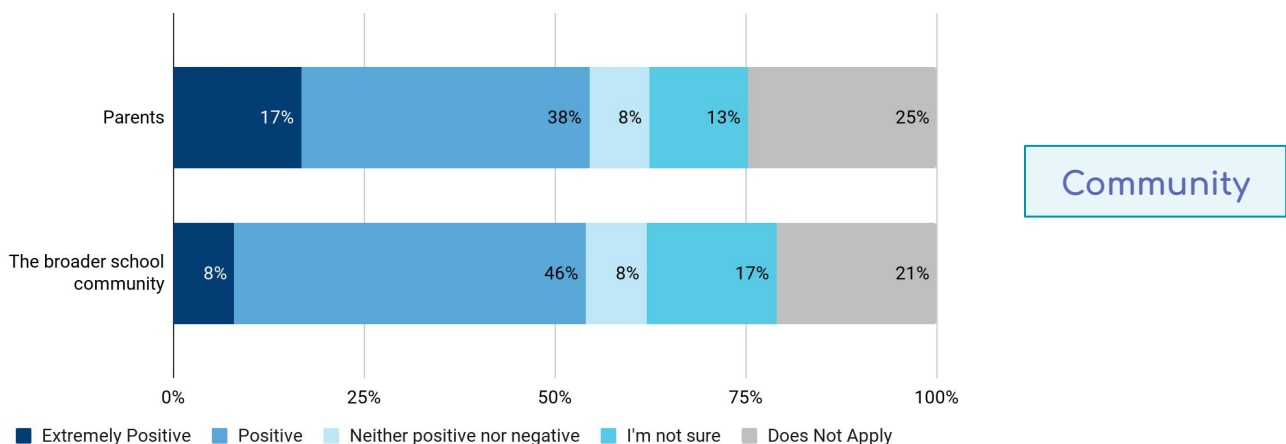
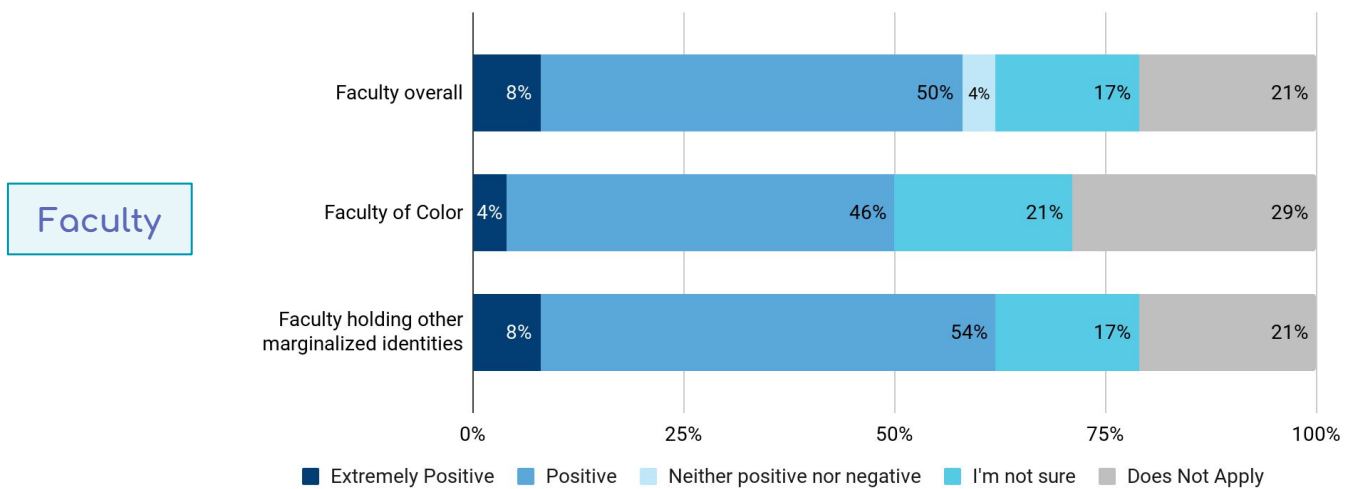
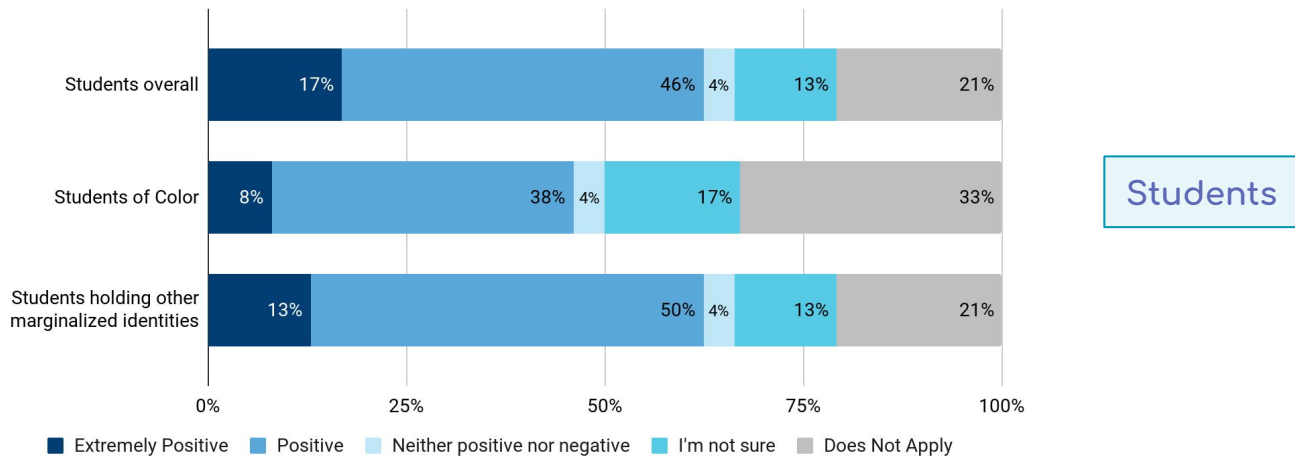
### Community



# Survey Results

## Cultures of Belonging Impact – Policies

When thinking about the **policies** their school adopted towards building a stronger culture of belonging, respondents described the following impact on various school community members-



# Survey Results

## Cultures of Belonging Impact

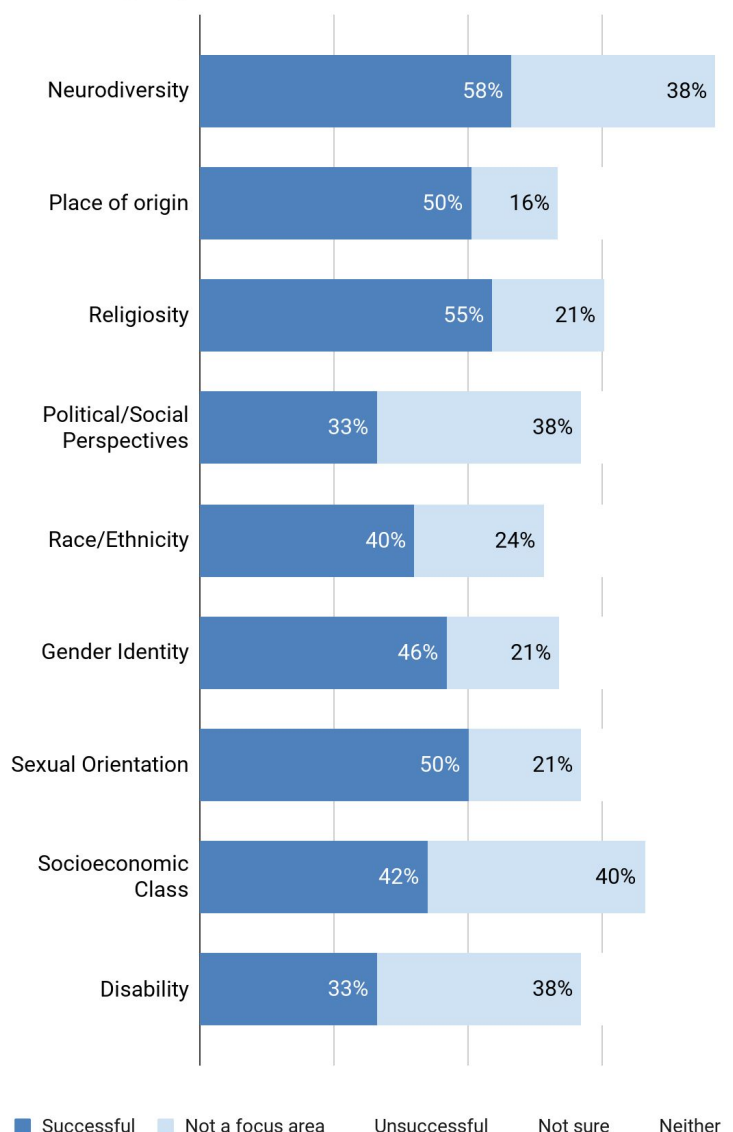
According to the school leaders surveyed, by far the most positive outcomes of their work with Prizmah are reported for students.

In particular, when asked what changes have occurred since their school began its Culture of Belonging work, respondents agreed and strongly agreed that there has been an improved *“sense of belonging”* for all groups, especially students (72%) and teachers (60%).

Students are also reported to experience improvements in *“psychological safety”* (68%) and *“feeling valued by the other members of the community”* (68%).

In addition, students (68%), teachers (60%), administration (52%), and other members of the community (52%) benefit from a *“more welcoming school culture.”*

In which areas, if any, did your team focus on increasing representation and how successful was it?



When asked what sorts of programs/actions have been implemented since their school community began its Cultures of Belonging work and how they were received by the school learning community, leaders said that schools had the most success\*–

*“facilitating conversations about commitment to nurturing a culture of belonging”*  
(48%)

*“creating workshops about building/deepening cultures of belonging”*  
(40%)

and

*“introducing/increasing educational material which represent a wider range of voices”*  
(36%)

Interestingly, the most challenging actions\* overlapped perfectly with the above– introducing new material (40%), facilitating conversations (32%), and creating workshops (28%).

\* “Fully accepted, no major challenges”

\*\* “Accepted with few or many challenges”

# Qualitative Summary

## Emergent Themes

For this report, emergent themes were identified through applying Thematic Content Analysis to data gathered from 5 focus groups conducted with key interest holders from 5 different schools that are part of Prizmah’s network of Jewish day schools. This method involves a process of analysis and reflection that first applies codes to important segments of narrative language in each interview or focus group, and then organizes/categorizes these codes into themes identified as particularly salient across the entire qualitative dataset. In the current evaluation, 5 primary themes were identified: (1) Understanding Cultures of Belonging; (2) Effective Activities & Initiatives; (3) Barriers & Challenges; (4) Prizmah Impact; and (5) Key Learnings.

### Understanding & Building a Culture of Belonging

This theme refers to language referencing how participants understand or define a culture of belonging within their school. In these data, participants defined a culture of belonging as a holistic environment where all members of the school community—students, parents, families, and staff—feel valued, included, and part of a cohesive whole. This sense of belonging involves open communication, mutual respect, and the opportunity for each person to bring their authentic self into the school community. Participants discussed the difference between inclusion and belonging, where one participant explained, “Inclusion is inviting someone to the table, and belonging is believing they should be at the table.” This distinction illustrates that belonging goes beyond physical presence; it includes a sense of being genuinely valued. Participants in all focus groups described their ongoing commitment to implementing activities that build a culture of belonging, particularly efforts to welcome diverse student narratives into academic and non-academic school activities, and engaging faculty in decision making processes like crafting school mission statements and other policies/programs.

However, there was a sense that efforts to create a culture of belonging are not equally experienced by all interest holders in a school. Participants frequently mentioned that, while students often feel this sense of belonging, parents and staff may not experience it to the same degree. One administrator, for example, stated “I think the students definitely feel that they’re part of a community. I don’t necessarily feel that the parents feel that they’re part of a community.” There was also some evidence that parents from non-Jewish or historically marginalized communities particularly struggle to experience a sense of belonging; even when schools take significant action to be inclusive. As one participant stated, “I love the way my school has supported my child, who’s non-binary, in speaking about that experience. And at the same time, it’s been quite frustrating as a parent to hear other parents talking about something that so deeply impacts my family in a way that I think is not encouraging us to share or feel a sense that we belong.” This experience emphasizes the complex, multi-layered challenges of this work, and the ongoing need for a school to continually engage all key interest holders within its community as they work towards building a culture of belonging.

# Qualitative Analysis Summary (cont'd)

## Barriers & Challenges

This theme can be understood as language identifying or discussing barriers or challenges participants have experienced regarding efforts to foster a culture of belonging. Barriers to building a culture of belonging include cultural misunderstandings, insufficient parent engagement, and the difficulties of balancing the school's religious identity with inclusivity. These challenges appear most pronounced for non-Jewish staff, new teachers, and parents from different backgrounds, who may struggle to feel fully integrated into the school's community. For example, there were reports of cultural insensitivity from students toward staff members from racial/ethnic minority groups, reflecting a barrier in student understanding and cultural awareness.

One participant shared, "The kids asked her like, what kind of rap music do you like?" in reference to a Black teacher, illustrating a lack of cultural awareness among students that underscores the challenge of making racial minority staff feel welcome in a school environment. There was also consistent mention of the challenge of parental buy-in or resistance to school efforts to create an inclusive culture of belonging; particularly when a family's values or beliefs are not aligned with a schools'.

As one participant stated, "It's like the parents who most need the education are the ones that tend to not show up to things... when we do parent programs... it doesn't have as broad an impact because it hits a subgroup." This experience suggests how limited engagement from some families makes it difficult to build a cohesive community, regardless of a school's efforts. Participants also commonly mentioned a tension between policies or practices they hold as a particular type of Jewish school, that often seems at odds with their intention to create inclusive school environments. For example, food policies related to keeping Kosher in a school was often noted as a potential source of tension for both families that do and do not keep Kosher. As one participant stated, "We want anyone that holds Jewish identity as something important for them and their children to find a place at our school... If we want to think expansively and really honor all the different ways in which families might be practicing on their own, we need to think about this [food policy] through a different lens." This example demonstrates the role policies within a school environment can have complex impacts on a schools efforts to create an inclusive culture of belonging.

Certainly, these issues of school policies are an important aspect of this work. But it is also important to note the bulk of conversation within this theme across focus groups gravitated towards issues related to religious pluralism, with only some attention to or discussion of issues like race/racism and gender identity. It is difficult to determine if this trend was simply indicative of the more salient challenges these schools face due to the demographic make-up of their schools, or if it was an indicator of a greater hesitance or resistance to engage in discussion around what are often considered more challenging topics related to school inequity or marginalization within Jewish communities.

# Qualitative Analysis Summary (cont'd)

## Effective Activities & Initiatives

This theme includes participant reflections on activities or initiatives that they feel have been particularly effective in fostering a culture of belonging in their schools. Effective actions and activities identified in the focus groups are those that are intentional, academic and non-academic initiatives that foster personal connections among students, faculty, and families, and support community engagement and inclusion. Participants discussed implementation of several such programs and activities, ranging from explicit curricula within classrooms to implicit day-to-day practices that nurture relationships in the informal learning environment of a school. For example, one focus group participant described purposeful infusion of Sephardic narratives into elementary school curricula, and creating a parent leadership and engagement opportunity through forming a parent diversity and belonging committee; both of which were described as successful methods of improving engagement of students and parents, and affirming the experiences and needs of community members from historically marginalized populations.

## Key Learnings from Efforts to Build a Culture of Belonging

Another participant described their middle school's 'Keshet time,' a regular semi-structured time for students to check-in informally with one another in small groups during the school day, saying, "It's really nice...students who sometimes don't share anything in class, don't want to...all of a sudden they're talking, they're excited." Another school's personnel reflected on their Shabbaton (weekend retreat) for high school students, noting, "students really feel like they're... part of a unified group when they wrap up." These examples demonstrate how schools are working to identify a myriad of activities intended to foster affirming experiences and interpersonal connections that help build inclusive communities, at a variety of school levels, both in-and-outside of the traditional classroom. Interestingly, most schools choose to engage in activities that make use of their unique strengths, personnel, creativity and resources. This suggests that evaluating the unique talents or capacities a school has at its disposal is a valuable step toward building authentic and sustainable initiatives.

This theme refers to language that includes reflections from participants on the insights they have gained from their efforts to build cultures of belonging in their schools. Participants emphasized the importance of transparency, sustained efforts and commitments, and faculty involvement as pivotal aspects of this work. The journey of pursuing a culture of belonging also has revealed the need for adaptability, shared ownership, and continuous responsiveness to community needs. Many participants noted the impact of being an educator at this unique moment in history, as many of their schools began intentionally working towards improved belonging during the societal and cultural upheaval around racial equity of 2019. This period in time influenced how integrated social justice ideals/concepts into school's efforts to cultivate community belonging. However, for some participants attention and effort in this domain has waned. One participant noted, for example, "For a while, our organization had a DEI committee, and that's kind of fizzled out."

# Qualitative Analysis Summary (cont'd)

The discontinuation in the previous example highlights the importance of sustained efforts to achieve lasting progress in belonging. But while some efforts have stalled, others appear to be growing in ways that suggest the value of continued holistic attention to issues of belonging. Faculty involvement in these efforts underscored the importance of transparency, and engagement with multiple interest holders in a school. As one participant shared, “faculty participation [in crafting a mission statement] was unheard of” in the past, but is now seen as vital for long-term success. Overall, participants commonly mentioned a recognition of alignment between their personal motivations to be an educator, the mission and/or values of their school, and efforts to cultivate a culture of belonging. This alignment appears to both a source of encouragement and professional grounding that has helped sustain participant’s efforts to build a culture of belonging in their schools. Indeed, a number of participants noted that this work has helped clarify and solidify how their school expresses its values, and thus strengthened their confidence in their school’s mission and identity.

## The Impact of Prizmah

This theme refers to specific mention of how Prizmah contributed to a school’s efforts to build a culture of belonging. Participants commonly noted that, as an organizational network that supports Jewish day schools, Prizmah has provided leadership and substantive assistance to their schools in a variety of ways, by providing guidance, resources, and frameworks that support a school’s community-building initiatives. These efforts have been instrumental in advancing discussions on diversity and inclusivity within the schools involved in these focus groups. As one participant stated, “when Prizmah took on this role... of building this culture community... we became involved,” acknowledging Prizmah’s leadership role in helping the school recognize the need to adopt community belonging principles and expand its commitment to diversity.

Another participant noted the value of Prizmah’s guidance on how to structure and implement specific belonging initiatives, and the provision of professional development and training opportunities for their school’s counselors and teachers, which has helped increase the capacity of their school to foster a culture of belonging. Other participants appreciated funding opportunities developed by Prizmah, that they have used to pay for programs like school-break camps for Jewish youth of color, or consultants that specialize in developing inclusive Jewish educational environments. Taken together, these reflections suggest that being part of the Prizmah network has helped school professionals strengthen their understanding and implementation of equity and inclusion initiatives, which has been crucial in aligning their efforts with the goal of building inclusive cultures of belonging.

# Atlanta Jewish Academy

The Atlanta Jewish Academy (AJA) is a modern orthodox Jewish day school located in Atlanta, Georgia. It serves students from early childhood through 12th grade, offering a dual curriculum that integrates rigorous general studies with Judaic education. AJA emphasizes a commitment to Jewish values, academic excellence, and personal growth within a supportive community environment. Situated in the Atlanta area, the school draws families from various nearby neighborhoods, with a significant portion coming from the Toco Hills area, known for its vibrant Jewish community.

## Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

For AJA, cultivating a sense of belonging within the school involves creating an environment where students, staff, and families feel valued, respected, and connected to the community. A sense of belonging means not only being invited into the community, but feeling like an integral part of it. As one participant shared, “Inclusion is inviting someone to the table, and belonging is believing they should be at the table,” highlighting an important distinction between inclusion and a sense of true belonging.

In practice, belonging for students is strongly rooted in relationships they build with peers and faculty and the bonds reflected in these relationships are a powerful indicator of AJA’s efforts. However, participants observed that parents and some faculty, particularly non-Jewish or new staff members, may not experience the same depth of belonging due to a lack of targeted efforts in integrating these groups fully into the school community.

## The Prizmah Effect

AJA has had a 4 year partnership with Prizmah, which participants credited with substantially improving the school’s capacity to foster community belonging; particularly among school faculty/staff. During this time, Prizmah has provided AJA teachers with learning/professional development opportunities, and school counselors with coaching on how to affirm and support the diverse needs and identities of community members.

## Taking Effective Action

The school has implemented various programs and activities that are central to fostering a culture of belonging among students and staff. These actions, both academic and social, provide essential touchpoints for community connection:

**Keshear Time:** This middle school program is a 15 minute non-academic period where students and teachers sit in a circle, check-in with one another, and play a game as a group. This program fosters personal connections in a relaxed setting, and often is successful in engaging students who don’t often participate in traditional classroom environments.

**Shabbatonim:** Shabbatonim, or weekend retreats, were also noted as significant events that reinforce community bonds. These retreats allow students and staff to interact outside of the school environment, encouraging stronger connections that provide students with novel opportunities to deepen friendships and their sense of community within the school.

### Faculty Involvement in Decision-Making:

Intentionally involving faculty in discussions on significant school decisions, such as mission statement development, has been an important aspect of cultivating staff belonging. This level of involvement was less common in the past, and has now given staff a sense of agency and shared ownership in the school’s direction; notably improving the collaborative spirit of the school.

# Atlanta Jewish Academy (cont'd)

## Challenges and Growth

The focus group discussed several challenges in creating a sense of belonging that is inclusive of the entire school community. These challenges stem from both cultural differences and gaps in inclusivity efforts, particularly among parents and faculty from diverse backgrounds.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Participants highlighted instances where non-Jewish or racially diverse staff experienced insensitive questions from students, which created discomfort and highlighted gaps in cultural sensitivity. For example, an instance was described in which an Asian staff member was asked by students, “What kind of Asian are you?” This reflects a need for greater student education around cultural diversity to create a more welcoming environment for all staff.
- **Parent Inclusivity:** Some participants observed that parents from outside the primary community area feel less connected to the school, noting that the school can sometimes feel “very Toco-centric,” referring to the local area where most families live. This geographical divide highlights a challenge in creating a cohesive community across diverse parent demographics and backgrounds.
- **Balancing Tradition and Inclusivity:** Another challenge lies in balancing the school’s traditional, modern orthodox Jewish values with a more inclusive mission. Participants noted that while they strive for diversity, there are boundaries defined by the school’s religious identity that can make inclusivity efforts complex, particularly when trying to expand cultural understanding.

*“We’re not always the welcoming community we think we are, but recognizing that gives us the opportunity to grow and improve.”*

*“Our students are tight-knit..., but we’ve realized there’s work to do in making parents and new faculty feel the same sense of connection and community.”*

## Key Learnings

The focus group members reflected on key learnings from their work on cultivating a culture of belonging within the school, highlighting the importance of shared ownership, continuous improvement, and community-specific solutions.

1. **Faculty Voice Matters:** A major takeaway is the importance of faculty involvement in decision-making processes, which contributes to staff feeling respected and valued.
2. **Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness:** Creating a lasting culture of belonging requires ongoing efforts to build cultural awareness, particularly for students.
3. **Continuous Adaptation:** Building belonging is an evolving process that requires continually adapting to societal changes and community needs.

# Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

Based in Rockville, Maryland, Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS) is a private Jewish day school in Rockville, Maryland, serving students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Known for its dual curriculum, CESJDS combines rigorous secular academics with a robust program in Jewish studies, Hebrew language, and Israel education. The school emphasizes pluralism, welcoming families from diverse Jewish backgrounds, and nurturing a strong sense of community. CESJDS is committed to fostering intellectual curiosity, ethical leadership, and a lifelong connection to Jewish values and traditions.

## Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

The group defined a culture of belonging as creating an environment where students, faculty, and families feel seen, valued, and respected in their full, authentic selves. Belonging at CESJDS is grounded in Jewish values and pluralism, emphasizing inclusivity across diverse practices and identities.

Key characteristics include a pluralistic philosophy that fosters respect for different forms of Jewish expression, an intention to empower individuals to explore their personal and religious identities through school programming, and holistic community engagement that engages parents, students, and faculty to create a sense of shared responsibility for fostering a culture of belonging.

## The Prizmah Effect

Prizmah's support has influenced CESJDS's journey by providing frameworks for inclusive practices and facilitating connections with other Jewish day schools. The group highlighted how collaboration with Prizmah enables CESJDS to reflect on its efforts, refine its approaches, and contribute to broader communal learning.

## Taking Effective Action

CESJDS has implemented numerous initiatives to embed belonging into the fabric of the school:

**Kodesh Prayer Program:** This program, which begins in elementary school, offers diverse prayer and/or hebrew learning settings, including Ashkenazi, Sephardi, partnership minyanim, and educational tracks, for all students. This approach ensures that all students can find a connection between their expressions of Judaism, and school activities.

**Student Leadership Empowerment:** Students are encouraged to take ownership of initiatives, such as within the school wellness center, in which student-led wellness 'fellows' in 9th and 10th grade help support the wellbeing of their peers.

**Special Events and Activities:** Celebrations such as Black History Month salons and inclusive Kabbalat Shabbat gatherings provide platforms for showcasing diversity and inclusion.

**Professional Development:** To build its capacity to provide an inclusive learning environment, CSJDS not only provides faculty training opportunities in inclusive practices and fostering dialogues on challenging topics like gender and cultural pluralism, but also has appointed diversity coordinators for each school division.

# Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (cont'd)

## Challenges and Growth

The school's pluralistic environment poses unique challenges:

- **Balancing Diverse Needs:** The school's pluralism means accommodating families with varying levels of religious observance. For example, the requirement for male students to wear a kippah led to some families feeling alienated, requiring ongoing discussions to ensure alignment with the school's values while maintaining inclusivity.
- **Parent-Community Dynamics:** Resistance from parents sometimes complicates the school's inclusivity efforts. For instance, the introduction of an LGBTQ+ educational workshop for students was met with mixed reactions, highlighting the need for more parent education and communication about the school's goals.
- **Evolving with the Community:** As demographics shift, CESJDS must adapt its policies. For example, during the admissions process, the school has had to address questions about how its pluralistic framework accommodates diverse family practices, showcasing the importance of clarity and adaptability in its messaging.

*"A culture of belonging is about more than being welcoming; it's about making sure every individual feels they truly belong in this space."*

*"Families choose to invest in us because of the way we create a warm, nurturing environment for every child to thrive."*

## Key Learnings

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of intentionality, responsiveness, and collaboration in fostering belonging:

1. **Sustainability Through Integration:** Belonging is not an event but a lens applied to all aspects of school culture, from classroom interactions to boardroom decisions.
2. **Inclusivity as Leadership:** By empowering students, faculty, and staff to lead initiatives, the school builds capacity for sustained change.
3. **Continual Evolution:** The school recognizes belonging as a journey, requiring ongoing dialogue and adaptation to meet emerging needs.

# Hannah Senesh Community Day School

Located in Brooklyn, New York, Hannah Senesh Community Day School is an independent Jewish day school serving students from kindergarten through 8th grade. The school is known for its progressive approach to education, emphasizing academic excellence, creative expression, a commitment to social justice, and a strong focus on Jewish heritage. Rooted in Jewish values and traditions, Hannah Senesh fosters a strong connection to Hebrew language, Jewish texts, and a sense of responsibility to the broader community.

## Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Participants described belonging as ensuring that every individual feels valued, respected, and seen in their full complexity. The school's approach emphasizes creating an environment where diverse Jewish identities and family structures are celebrated.

At Senesh, this concept is reflected in inclusive programming, like Hispanic Heritage Month events, intentional application of concepts/language, like *areyvut* (communal responsibility), that connect Jewish values with community inclusivity, and intentional and regular collaboration with parents, to ensure their perspectives and contributions are included in shaping school culture.

## The Prizmah Effect

Prizmah has played a pivotal role in supporting Senesh's journey. Participants noted that resources and guidance provided by Prizmah have helped the school refine its practices and connect with broader networks of Jewish educators. Specifically, the school-based camp for Jewish students/families of color was mentioned as an exciting expansion of Senesh's culture of belonging initiatives; a project made possible by funding support from Prizmah and the Covenant foundation. The focus group underscored the importance of this collaboration in enhancing professional development and expanding inclusive initiatives.

## Taking Effective Action

The Senesh School employs various strategies to support a culture of belonging:

### Comprehensive Curriculum Review:

Leadership teams conduct audits of library collections and educational materials to ensure representation of diverse perspectives. These efforts are credited with expanding the visibility of multicultural Jewish experiences for students of all ages.

**Intentional Affinity:** A parent diversity and belonging committee provides opportunities for families to engage with school culture building. This committee has spearheaded the creation of four different affinity spaces for Senesh families that includes groups for Jews of Color (JOC), LGBTQ, interfaith, and Sephardi/Mizrahi community members.

**JOC Camps:** Initiatives like February break camps, designed for children from Jewish families of color, demonstrate a commitment to community inclusivity that goes beyond course curricula.

**Collaborative Decision-Making:** The administration consults with advisory groups, including a task force for Jews of Color, to ensure programming reflects the needs of all families.

# Hannah Senesh Community Day School (cont'd)

## Challenges and Growth

While the school has made significant strides, participants acknowledged ongoing challenges:

- **Balancing Inclusion with Boundaries:** The school strives to include families as partners in programming while navigating disagreements over curriculum choices. For example, a parent engagement event designed to celebrate diverse Jewish practices led to disagreements about which traditions should be featured, requiring sensitive facilitation to navigate divergent views.
- **Navigating Polarized Opinions:** The diversity of family backgrounds occasionally results in conflicting expectations for inclusivity. For instance, during a curriculum review, disagreements arose about the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics, highlighting the need for continuous dialogue with families to find common ground.
- **Pacing Progress:** Leadership faces the challenge of implementing changes at a sustainable pace. For example, while faculty are eager to introduce initiatives, such as expanding the library's multicultural resources, some parents have expressed concern about the rapidity of these changes, requiring the school to balance innovation with community readiness.

*“Progress isn’t about quick fixes — it’s about taking thoughtful, intentional steps that align with our shared values.”*

*“Parents and families are partners in this work; they want to feel like this is not just a school their kids attend, but a community they’re part of too.”*

## Key Learnings

Participants reflected on the importance of aligning actions with values to build trust and foster engagement. Key insights included:

1. **Intentionality Matters:** Progress is best achieved through thoughtful, incremental steps rather than reactive changes.
2. **Shared Values Drive Community:** By embedding inclusivity into the school’s mission, leadership has cultivated a sense of shared purpose among stakeholders.
3. **Engagement Inspires Contribution:** Creating a welcoming environment empowers families and staff to actively participate in fostering belonging.

# Seattle Jewish Community School

Located in Seattle, Washington, SJCS is a pluralistic K-5 Jewish day school that emphasizes an inclusive and diverse community. It combines a strong academic program with Jewish values, Hebrew language, and cultural studies, fostering an environment where students build strong foundations in both general and Jewish education.

## Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Participants defined a sense of belonging as an environment where individuals can bring their authentic selves without fear of judgment. This includes enabling students, faculty, and families to explore aspects of their identities—such as gender expression, Jewish practice, and family traditions—in a safe, supportive space.

At SJCS, belonging is characterized by inclusivity in language, shared values, and a commitment to honoring diverse identities. Participants highlighted that the school's mission statement explicitly emphasizes the priority of creating an inclusive community for all students, families, and educational professionals; regardless of religious or cultural background.

## The Prizmah Effect

Prizmah's support emerged as a pivotal element in SJCS's community building efforts. Participants noted how funding from a Prizmah microgrant facilitated initiatives intended to promote a culture of belonging, and described this additional financial support as an important aspect of their ongoing efforts in this domain.

Prizmah's emphasis on network building and resource sharing inspired SJCS to reflect on its practices and contribute to the larger network of Jewish educational institutions. Participants expressed appreciation for this collaborative relationship and its role in supporting their vision for a more inclusive school.

## Taking Effective Action

The focus group shared several initiatives that exemplify SJCS's commitment to fostering belonging:

**Policy Adjustments:** Reflecting a holistic approach to fostering belonging, SJCS revised policies around dietary practices and religious observances; demonstrating a structural effort to accommodate students with diverse expressions of Jewish traditions.

**Cultural Exploration Activities:** Programs like Shabbat binders\* and cultural fairs invite students and families to share their unique traditions, encouraging cross-cultural appreciation.

**Diversity in Learning:** The admissions team is deeply committed to serving students with neurodivergent needs. While resource limitations occasionally arise, the team actively seeks ways to welcome and support these students.

**Community Partnerships:** Building relationships with the University of Washington's Sephardic studies program, and the Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery has infused attention to Sephardic history and inclusion throughout SJCS curricula. Collaboration with these organizations enhances students' understanding of multicultural Jewish identities, intergenerational connections, and community involvement.

\*Students use the binders at home to document how their families celebrate Shabbat, which are then shared within the classroom.

# Seattle Jewish Community School (cont'd)

## Challenges and Growth

While SJCS has made significant strides in creating an inclusive community, participants acknowledged ongoing challenges:

- **Balancing Process and Product:** The school often grapples with the tension between taking the time to engage in inclusive dialogue and achieving immediate results. For example, when discussing cultural representation in programming, leadership has had to mediate between families who want quick changes and those advocating for more deliberate planning to ensure all voices are heard.
- **Navigating Complex Symbolism:** Discussions around contentious topics, such as flags and cultural symbols, require patience, trust-building, and nuanced communication. For instance, a decision to display certain flags in the school's communal spaces required extensive conversations to address differing perspectives and ensure a sense of respect for all groups involved.
- **Resource Constraints:** Despite the school's dedication to serving diverse learners, limitations in resources occasionally impact its ability to fully meet the needs of all prospective students. For example, the admissions team sometimes faces difficult decisions about whether the school can provide adequate support for students with specific learning needs while maintaining inclusivity.

Participants expressed a shared commitment to continuous improvement, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth.

*“Belonging means creating a space where everyone can bring their authentic selves — students, teachers, and families alike — and feel safe to explore who they are.”*

*“The tension between process and product is always there, but taking the time to really listen to each other builds trust and moves us forward.”*

## Key Learnings

Participants emphasized the importance of authenticity, trust, and dialogue in their efforts to foster belonging. Key insights included:

1. **Non-Judgmental Environment:** The culture of acceptance at SJCS allows students and families to feel valued and supported.
2. **The Power of Process:** Building a culture of belonging is an ongoing journey that benefits from open dialogue, even when it is “messy.”
3. **Expansive Educational Philosophy:** By offering students the freedom to explore new aspects of their identities, and the real diversity of Jewish community, the school fosters personal and communal growth.

# Solomon Schechter Day School

The Solomon Schechter Day School (SSDS) of Greater Hartford, in West Hartford, Connecticut, is a Jewish community day school offering education from early childhood through eighth grade. The school provides a forward-thinking, student-centered education that inspires students to love learning, celebrate Jewish life, connect with each other, and build a vibrant future for themselves and their community. The curriculum integrates rigorous secular academics with Judaic studies, emphasizing Hebrew language, Jewish texts, and traditions. The school fosters a joyful, challenging, and creative environment, encouraging students to develop wisdom, a good heart, and a strong sense of community.

## Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

Participants defined a culture belonging as creating an environment where students and families feel authentically seen, respected, and supported. For SSDS, this includes an expansive understanding of diversity within Judaism and the school community. Programs emphasize representation, celebration and visibility of Jewish traditions reflective of the diversity of Jewish identities, experiences, and expressions.

There is also a holistic approach to education at SSDS, that allows teachers to follow their own passions, with flexibility to address students' individual needs. School personnel also are proactive in examining how to welcome families/students with diverse observance levels, cultural backgrounds, and family structures. This intentional effort to create a culture of belonging begins in early childhood programs, and is given consistent attention as students grow within the school.

## The Prizmah Effect

Prizmah has provided critical support in fostering belonging at SSDS. The school has benefited from a Prizmah grant, enabling collaboration with [Keshet](#) and introducing professional development opportunities for staff. Prizmah's resources and network connections have empowered SSDS to refine its initiatives and contribute to the broader Jewish educational landscape.

## Taking Effective Action

SSDS has implemented a range of initiatives to foster a culture of belonging:

**Pluralistic Jewish Education:** To build greater understanding of multicultural diversity within Judaism, SSDS has integrated a variety of Jewish cultural traditions into curriculum and school celebrations, including Sephardic holidays like Mimuna and Ethiopian observances like Sigd.

**Support for Diverse Identities:** The school has partnered with organizations like Keshet to provide training and guidance for supporting LGBTQ+ students and families. These efforts have influenced both structural/policy and curriculum changes to better reflect SSDS' commitment to community inclusion.

**Personalized Professional Development:** In an effort to develop buy-in and a sense of agency, faculty are encouraged to set and pursue their own growth goals, creating a more engaged and intentional teaching environment.

**Holistic Community Connections:** Early childhood programs introduce students to a wide variety of Jewish traditions through explorations of cultural expressions, food, and language, fostering cultural pride and understanding of breadth of Jewish expression from the youngest ages.

# Solomon Schechter Day School (cont'd)

## Challenges and Growth

While SSDS has made significant progress, challenges remain:

- **Parent Resistance:** While the school embraces progressive educational practices, some parents resist certain initiatives. For example, during a workshop on racial equity, a small group of parents expressed discomfort with the focus on social justice topics, requiring additional outreach and dialogue to build understanding.
- **Balancing Inclusion and Messaging:** Communicating inclusivity in a way that resonates with all families can be difficult. For instance, a newsletter introducing the celebration of non-Ashkenazi Jewish holidays received mixed feedback, prompting the school to refine its communication strategy to better articulate its goals.
- **Resource Allocation:** Limited resources occasionally constrain program expansion. For example, while the school successfully partnered with Keshet to support LGBTQ+ inclusion, plans to expand training to all divisions were delayed due to time and staffing limitations.

*“For us, belonging means recognizing that fair doesn’t mean giving everyone the same thing—it means giving everyone what they need to succeed.”*

*“Students get it — they accept new ideas with open arms; it’s the adults who need more time and effort to adjust.”*

## Key Learnings

Participants reflected on their growth and the school’s evolution as a welcoming community:

1. **Intentional Inclusivity:** Success requires both clear vision and consistent application across programs, from preschool to middle school.
2. **Student Openness:** Children tend to embrace inclusivity more readily than adults, serving as role models for resilience and acceptance.
3. **Growth Through Feedback:** Recognizing and addressing gaps in belonging—such as better representation and affirmation of Jews of Color—drives meaningful progress.

# Closing Thoughts

The Prizmah Cultures of Belonging study illuminates the transformative potential of fostering belonging within Jewish day schools, highlighting both successes and challenges. Through comprehensive research that included surveys, focus groups, and in-depth case studies, the report showcases how intentional actions and frameworks can foster inclusion, empathy, and respect across school communities. Central to this work is the recognition that belonging is not merely about inclusion but about creating spaces where every individual—students, faculty, and families—feels seen, valued, and integral to the community's fabric.

Key insights from the study underscore the importance of adaptability, shared responsibility, and targeted interventions. Many schools have implemented innovative practices, from culturally inclusive programming to policy shifts supporting diversity in gender identity, religiosity, and neurodiversity. These initiatives are driven by collaboration and shared ownership, emphasizing that belonging is a journey, not a destination. Yet, this report also highlights areas where growth is needed, particularly in addressing resistance to inclusivity and balancing traditional values with the evolving needs of diverse interest holders.

The study positions Prizmah as a pivotal partner in this journey, providing schools with resources, guidance, and a network for shared learning. However, the findings also encourage reflection on how to deepen this work, particularly in addressing specific identity experiences and ensuring sustainable impact across all school demographics. As schools continue to evolve, the commitment to fostering cultures of belonging will require ongoing dialogue, intentionality, and innovation, paving the way for more inclusive and connected Jewish educational communities.

## High-Level Takeaways

1. Engaging in Cultures of Belonging work helps clarify and solidify school values, fostering alignment between mission and identity.
2. The most effective activities/initiatives appear to be grounded in a school's specific strengths, personnel, and resources.
3. Discussions and interventions focused on specific identity experiences (especially race) seem to have been less prioritized over more general discussions of belonging. There is a need for more engagement with 'harder' conversations related to cultures of belonging in Jewish day schools.
4. Taken together, these findings point to a small, but dedicated cohort of schools in Prizmah's network committed to building Cultures of Belonging for their communities.
5. Prizmah is currently positioned to (re)evaluate and (re)define their position and role in the work that these schools are taking up.

# Appendix: Case Study School Rosters

## Atlanta Jewish Academy

The focus group included five participants representing diverse roles within the school, each bringing unique perspectives on fostering a sense of belonging:

- **Joel Rojek:** General Studies Principal, a non-Jewish educator with over two decades of experience in Jewish education, having transitioned from an English teacher to an administrator.
- **Franeen Sarif:** Executive Director, originally from South Africa, with over 30 years of experience within the school and its predecessor institutions, having served in various administrative and teaching roles.
- **Sylvia Miller:** A retired Jewish educator and counselor, with nearly three decades of experience at the school, who remains actively involved in initiatives related to belonging and community culture.
- **Tzvi Urkowitz:** Judaic Studies Middle School Curriculum Coordinator and teacher, with seven years at the school and extensive experience in Jewish education, committed to bridging divides within the student body.
- **Missy Rivner:** Middle School Principal with eight years at the school and a total of 18 years in education, overseeing both academic and social-emotional learning in middle school.

These participants brought a range of experiences, responsibilities, and perspectives on fostering a culture of belonging, particularly in the context of a modern orthodox Jewish educational institution.

## Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

The focus group for the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS) consisted of a diverse group of educators, administrators, and parents who bring unique insights into the school's efforts to create a culture of belonging:

- **Mitch Malkus (he/him):** Head of School with 12 years at CESJDS, emphasizing leadership and a commitment to fostering inclusivity and excellence across grades.
- **Lisa Vardy (she/her):** High School Principal, with four years at CESJDS and 28 years in education, focused on empowering students and teachers to foster a culture of belonging.
- **Matthew Bellas (he/him):** Lower School Principal, with 11 years at CESJDS and 20 in Jewish day schools, bringing deep experience in pluralistic education.
- **Aliza Libman Baronofsky (she/her):** Educator and parent, with nine years of teaching at CESJDS and two children currently enrolled, offering dual perspectives as a faculty member and parent.

# Appendix: Case Study School Rosters (cont'd)

## Hannah Senesh Community Day School

This focus group included six members of the Senesh School community, representing diverse roles and perspectives:

- **Nicole Nash (she/her):** Head of School for 30 years, emphasizing strategic leadership and preserving the school's foundational values of inclusivity and belonging.
- **Jamie Maxner (she/her):** Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement, focusing on external collaboration and creating a welcoming space for diverse Jewish families.
- **Amanda Miller-Burg:** Parent of two students, former co-chair of the Diversity and Belonging Committee, and current board member, committed to amplifying the school's inclusive values.
- **Phyllis Sussman (she/her):** Judaic Studies Department Head with 16 years at Senesh, passionate about evolving curriculum to reflect the complexities of Jewish identity.
- **Siobhan Balazs (she/her):** Director of Communications since 2020, responsible for ensuring the school's inclusivity message permeates all communication and media.

## Seattle Jewish Community School

The focus group included five participants from the SJCS community, each playing a critical role in fostering a culture of belonging:

- **David Zimand (he/him):** Head of School with four years of tenure, emphasizing inclusive leadership and strategic planning to strengthen the school's culture.
- **Amy Duncan (she/her):** A general studies teacher with 12 years at SJCS, transitioning from a parent to an educator, focusing on creating supportive and non-judgmental classroom environments.
- **Ray (they/them):** Director of Jewish Learning and Life, with three years of experience at SJCS, bringing expertise from various Jewish education settings.
- **Mekhala (she/her):** Behavioral Health Counselor with five years at the school, providing critical support for students' socioemotional well-being and advocating for inclusive mental health practices.
- **Rebecca Finkel (she/her):** Former Board President and parent of two students, contributing a parent's perspective and strategic vision for expanding inclusivity.

# Appendix: Case Study School Rosters (cont'd)

## Solomon Schechter Day School

This focus group featured dedicated educators and administrators from Solomon Schechter Day School (SSDS), highlighting their unique paths and contributions to the school's vision:

- **Sarah Montag:** Director of Teaching and Learning, in her fifth year at SSDS, supporting differentiated instruction and curriculum oversight while serving as a resource for teachers and parents.
- **Robin Werner:** Early Childhood Director with over 20 years of experience at SSDS, overseeing curriculum and parent engagement while fostering foundational belonging for young families.
- **Yoni Berger:** Head of School, now in his fourth year, bringing a progressive vision and strong leadership to the school community.
- **Jill Gengras:** Behavioral Health Director with a background in educational psychology, providing student and family support for the past five years.

# Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol

## Assessing & Enhancing Prizmah's Cultures of Belonging Focus Group Protocol Draft

### Overview

*The following protocol describes the content and structure of focus groups to be conducted with a selection of Prizmah schools for the purpose of exploring how these schools are taking action to develop a culture of belonging. There will be 5 focus groups in total; with up to 5 representatives from a single school in each group. Each focus group is estimated to take approximately 90 minutes. The focus groups are designed to be semi-structured, allowing the facilitator the flexibility to elicit greater depth and complexity in participant responses through prompts, comments, and follow-up questions. The qualitative data gathered from these focus groups will then be analyzed, and organized into five 1-2 page case study reports; one per participating school.*

### Introduction/Welcome from Facilitator:

- The facilitator will begin by introducing themselves, and providing a brief description of focus group purpose and structure. There will be a reminder of the confidentiality of the process and an opportunity for questions from participants.

### Focus Group Questions:

I'd love to begin by learning a bit more about you all. Can you please take a minute to introduce yourselves (role, tenure, background, etc.)?

As representatives of your school, you have unique knowledge, experience about and insight into your community. With this perspective, how would you describe the strengths of your school community (organization, colleagues, students, families, community)?

This project is intended to explore how Prizmah schools are working to create cultures of belonging. How would you define a culture of belonging? What would this look like, ideally, in your school?

Given this definition/description, how do you feel about the objective of building a culture of belonging at [school name], broadly speaking?

As part of Prizmah's network, you have been working toward this objective for [x] years. What has this process been like for you at the: (1) organizational level; (2) classroom level; (3) community level? What is the degree of buy-in or engagement in your community for this work?

The goal of creating a culture of belonging is often intended to specifically and positively address the needs of community members that have been historically underserved (give some examples/definitions), in pursuit of greater educational equity and inclusion. How do you think your students and their families who are members of these communities would describe their experience in your school? Would you say the experiences of families from these communities have improved since you began this work? Are there any specific populations that you hope to support to a greater degree in the future?

# Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol (cont'd)

Are there any specific activities/programs/policies that you feel have been particularly successful in fostering a culture of belonging in your school? (if so, why do you think these are working well?)

Culture change work is hard, and often brings up significant and unanticipated challenges within any organizational system. What have been some challenges you have faced since you began this work? How have you responded to these challenges?

What resources/contexts have you found to be particularly helpful in this work? What supports or additional resources do you think you need to move your school forward in this work?

If it were up to you, what would you recommend your school focus on in the coming year or two to move forward in fostering an improved culture of belonging at [school]?

Looking back, what are some of the key learnings that have stuck with you about pursuing a culture of belonging at [school] since you began this work?

## **Conclusion**

Thank you's, final thoughts, closing questions, and description of next steps

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol



## Cultures of Belonging

Over the past 4 years, Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools has been supporting Jewish day school and yeshiva leaders as they endeavor to cultivate and deepen their school's Culture of Belonging. Prizmah leadership aims to gain an understanding of these efforts, extracting valuable insights and lessons to not only inform their practices, but also to share this wealth of knowledge with the broader educational community.

Tiyuv תיבוב and Prizmah are engaged in a research partnership to tell the story of Prizmah-affiliated schools' efforts to cultivate and deepen their culture of belonging.

Hearing about your school's unique experiences related to this work is important to Prizmah, as it will help them identify what is working well, where challenges remain, and where school leaders can take action in the future.

The goals of this survey are to:

1. Gain a better understanding how Jewish day schools and yeshivas participating in Prizmah's Cultures of Belonging work have experienced their efforts;
2. Give school leaders an opportunity to provide feedback on the interventions, resources, and other supports provided by Prizmah during their partnership;
3. Put survey findings in conversation with learnings from Focus Groups conducted with a select group of representatives from schools engaged in this work; and
4. Showcase learnings in an accessible resource that can help inform the strategy of other Jewish day school and yeshiva communities seeking to engage in similar work.

Should you choose to participate:

- The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Your responses will be kept confidential and secure (they will not be shared with anyone outside of the project team, which includes Tiyuv and Prizmah staff).
- Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time with no consequence.
- You will not be compensated for your participation.
- There are no direct benefits to participating, however you may experience satisfaction in contributing your perspective towards improving Prizmah's ongoing work to support schools in building robust Cultures of Belonging.

Please click [next] to continue on to the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, its procedures, or risks and benefits, please contact Debra Shaffer Seeman at [debras@prizmah.org](mailto:debras@prizmah.org).

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### Background Information

1. How does your school identify itself?

- Community/Non-Denominational
- Conservative
- Orthodox
- Modern Orthodox
- Reform
- Pluralistic
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify):

2. Which grade levels does your school serve? (Select all that apply)

- Early Learning Center
- Elementary/Primary School
- Middle School
- High School

3. Approximately how many students attend your school?

- <75
- 76-150
- 151-300
- 301-500
- 501-700
- 701-1000
- 1001+

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

4. Which of the following best describes your role in the Jewish Day School where you work?

- Teacher/Instructor
- Lead Teacher
- Principal/Head of School
- Asst. Principal/Asst. Head of School (or equivalent)
- Division Director/Dean (or equivalent)
- School Advancement Professional
- Student Services Personnel
- Learning/Instructional Support
- School Board Member
- Admissions Professional
- Fundraising & Development Professional
- Business Officer (CFO, executive director)
- Judaic Administrator
- Educational Technology Professional
- School-based Lay Leader

Something else (please specify):

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### Background Information

5. In your own words, briefly describe what "Culture of Belonging" means to you. (2-3 sentences)

6. When did your school partner with Prizmah in this Cultures of Belonging work? (Select all that apply)

- 2020-2021
- 2021-2022
- 2022-2023
- 2023-2024
- I'm not sure

7. Which, if any, of the following motivated your school community to start engaging in this partnership with Prizmah? (Select all that apply)

- Requests from parents
- Requests from students
- Requests from faculty
- Requests from board Members
- Desire to expand learning on this topic
- Desire to take action on this topic
- Available funding
- A challenge that arose within the school community (please explain):

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### Background Information

8. Which, if any, of the following resources did your school work with? (Select all that apply)

- A consultant paid by Prizmah
- An educational provider other than Prizmah
- Prizmah as an educational provider
- Something else (please share):

- I'm not sure

9. Which types of support did your school receive through your work with Prizmah? (Select all that apply)

- Exploring our school's vision and/or mission around building a culture of belonging
- Defining strategy regarding race and ethnicity
- Developing programs for students
- Evaluating, creating, or choosing new curricular materials
- Professional development for faculty (workshops, courses)
- Engagement of school families
- Engagement of school faculty
- Planning support for any of the above
- I'm not sure
- Something else (please share):

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

10. Which members of your school community were involved in the Cultures of Belonging work? (Select all that apply)

- Teachers
- Division Leaders
- Senior Administration
- Other educational employees (classroom aids, paraprofessionals)
- Other employees (facilities, security, etc)
- Board Members
- Parents
- Community Members
- I'm not sure
- Others not listed (please share):

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### People and Programs

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how your school supports a Culture of Belonging?

**Students...**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Are given adequate education and resources to do the work of cultivating a culture of belonging in their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are offered opportunities to further develop their expertise on cultures of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are encouraged to participate in efforts to create a culture of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are encouraged to become leaders for institutionalizing a culture of belonging within their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are held accountable when their behavior negatively impacts the school's culture of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive school-wide recognition for their participation in cultures of belonging efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how your school supports a Culture of Belonging?

**Faculty...**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Are given adequate education and resources to do the work of cultivating a culture of belonging in their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are offered opportunities to further develop their expertise on cultures of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are encouraged to participate in efforts to create a culture of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are encouraged to become leaders for institutionalizing a culture of belonging within their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are held accountable when their behavior negatively impacts the school's culture of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive school-wide recognition for their participation in cultures of belonging efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### People and Programs

13. Thinking about the practices your school uses to build a stronger culture of belonging, how would you describe the impact on the following school community members?

	Extremely Positive	Positive	Neither positive nor negative	Negative	Extremely Negative	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Students overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The broader school community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



**PRIZMAH**  
Center for Jewish Day Schools

## Cultures of Belonging

### People and Programs

14. When you think about the **CURRENT** members of your school community, including faculty, families, and students, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
It feels like a community of friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student perspectives are consistently valued	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff perspectives are consistently valued	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a strong relationship between parents and teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school community values diverse opinions/beliefs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school administration responds appropriately to conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

15. Which areas, if any, did your team focus on increasing representation and to what extent were those efforts successful?

	Extremely Successful	Successful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Extremely Unsuccessful	I'm not sure	We did not focus on this
Neurodiversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Place of origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religiosity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political/Social Perspectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race/Ethnicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender Identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socioeconomic/Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Something else (please share):

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### People and Programs

16. What sorts of **programs/actions** have been implemented since your school community began its Culture of Belonging work and how were they received by the school learning community?

	Fully accepted, no major challenges	Accepted, with a few challenges	Accepted, with many challenges	Not accepted	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Facilitating conversations about commitment to nurturing a culture of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating People of Color (POC)-led and -oriented spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating workshops about building/deepening cultures of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introducing/Increasing educational material which represent a wider range of voices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinating student trips or shabbatonim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Something else (please specify)

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

17. Thinking about the **programs** your school adopted towards building a stronger culture of belonging, how would you describe the impact on the following school community members?

	Extremely Positive	Positive	Neither positive nor negative	Negative	Extremely Negative	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Students overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The broader school community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



## Cultures of Belonging

### Policies and Practices

18. In which, if any, of the following areas did your school implement or edit school **policies**? (Select all that apply)

- Non-Discrimination
- Conflict Resolution (ex. Nonviolent Communication, Restorative Justice, or similar)
- Hiring
- Student/Family Recruitment
- Board Representation
- Onboarding new faculty/board members
- None of the above

Something else (please share):

19. Thinking about the **policies and practices** your school adopted towards building a stronger culture of belonging, how would you describe the impact on the following school community members?

	Extremely Positive	Positive	Neither positive nor negative	Negative	Extremely Negative	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Students overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty of Color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty holding other marginalized identities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The broader school community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

## Cultures of Belonging

### Mission/Values

20. Does your school's mission and/or values statement(s) explicitly include a commitment to building a culture of belonging?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure
- We do not have a mission/values statement(s)

21. If your school does have a mission and/or values statement(s), does it reference any of the following?

	Yes	No	I'm not sure
Race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family composition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBTQ+ identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Something else (please specify):

22. As part of your Cultures of Belonging work, did your leadership consider making changes to its mission and/or values statement(s)?

- Yes, we made changes through this work.
- Yes, we considered making changes, but decided not to change anything.
- No, we did not consider making changes, though we hope to consider this in the future.
- No, we did not consider making changes and did not make any changes to these statements.
- I'm not sure
- We did not previously and do not currently have a mission/values statement(s).

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

## Cultures of Belonging

### Your Reflections

Since your school began its Culture of Belonging work, how much do you agree or disagree that there has been improvement in the following areas?

#### 23. For Students...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling valued by the other members of the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Greater capacity for self-advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved interpersonal relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More welcoming school culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 24. For Teachers...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling valued by the other members of the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Greater capacity for self-advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved interpersonal relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More welcoming school culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

## 25. For School Leadership/Administration...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling valued by the other members of the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Greater capacity for self-advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved interpersonal relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More welcoming school culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 26. For other members of the school community...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I'm not sure	Does not apply
Psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling valued by the other members of the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Greater capacity for self-advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved interpersonal relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More welcoming school culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

## Cultures of Belonging

### Your Reflections

27. What is something that your school community did in your efforts to nurture a Culture of Belonging that makes you proud?

28. What was a challenge faced while engaging in Cultures of Belonging work in your school community?

29. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences engaging in culture change work in your school setting?

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)



**PRIZMAH**

Center for Jewish Day Schools

## Cultures of Belonging

### About You

On this last page, we will be asking you a few more questions about who you are. These questions are to better understand who this survey has reached.

30. Which of these best describes your race? (Select all that apply)

- Asian or Asian American
- Black, African, or African American
- Hispanic or Latina/o/x/e
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native American, First Nation, or Indigenous American
- White
- Another race not listed (please specify):

- Prefer not to answer

31. Do you consider yourself Jewish in any way?

- Yes, I do
- No, I don't
- I'm not sure

32. What is your gender? (Select all that apply)

- Man
- Woman
- Nonbinary
- Another gender not listed (please specify):

- Prefer not to answer

# Appendix C: Survey Protocol (cont'd)

33. Do you identify as LGBTQIA+?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Prefer not to answer

34. Are any of the following true for you? (choose all that apply)

- I am chronically ill/identify as someone with one or more chronic illnesses.
- I am disabled/identify as someone with one or more disabilities.
- I am neurodivergent/identify as someone with one or more cognitive differences.
- Prefer not to answer

Prefer to self-describe (please share):

35. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you?