

Where do you see the field of Israel education in a post-10/7 world?

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The recent Mishlachat Areyvut trip to Israel was about bearing witness, demonstrating support, and creating connections among professional leaders in Israel and Jewish education. No matter how much news you read or watch, meeting with Israelis, from those who survived the murderous attacks of October 7 and their rescuers, to families of hostages, to those whose spouses and children are fighting the war is a profound and disturbing experience. Even after seeing with our own eyes the unbelievable ways Israelis are adapting, such as the makeshift Kibbutz Be'eri school by the Dead Sea, it is still hard to imagine anything beyond the crisis after 10/7. Our Jewish family worldwide has not yet taken the proverbial “walk around the block” that mourners take upon “getting up” from shiva. Imagining the field of Israel education “after” this communal tragedy is challenging.

And yet, our mission is to secure a strong Jewish future. Everything that happens at Jewish day schools and yeshivas is about the rising generation. We are mission-bound to think ahead, even when we feel stuck. At Prizmah, we celebrate the diversity of our schools—with vast differences in religious practice, educational philosophy, geography, and more. Yet, a



core Jewish value that our schools share is a deep relationship with Israel.

Put simply, Jewish day schools and yeshivas offer an immersive educational environment for Israel education, and it shows. It shows in the blue and white bulletin boards and the daily prayers for the State of Israel and its defenders. It shows in the 12,000 day school and yeshiva students who attended the Rally for Israel in Washington, DC, and the visible support of Canadian Jewish day schools in rallies across Canada. It shows among schools determined to resume student trips to Israel in the coming year.

It shows in the deep relationships day school cultivate between North American Jews and Israelis. Israelis populate our schools as Hebrew faculty, *shlichim*, and *shinshinim* (young emissaries). Thousands of Israelis living in America choose day schools for their children (including hundreds of new families finding refuge right now). Our alumni populate gap year programs and are among the most knowledgeable, proud, and confident voices on campuses. Many graduates make aliyah and serve in the IDF.

As the future unfolds, much of what we already do around forming bonds with Israel through education will continue.

That said, even before the current conflict, young people do not view Israel and the world through the same lens as their parents, they are profoundly influenced by hostile social media, and the world that greets them on campus and beyond challenges what

they learned and experienced at school. Moreover, the present reality further compels revisiting what and how our students learn about Israel. Along with nurturing the affective and behavioral components of Israel education, day schools offer opportunities to explore the cognitive ideas of Zionism. Whether Israel is taught as part of social studies or *limudei kodesh* (Judaic studies), in music, or Hebrew, there is more we can be doing to enable students to explore the nuances of patriotism and politics.

On the Mishlachat Areyvut trip, I connected with many respected providers of Israel education, who recognize that in a post-10/7 world, teachers will need new skills, knowledge, and curricula for a new Middle East and the sharp rise in antisemitism. We know from the pandemic that our schools can adapt to new realities; going forward, we expect schools will shift to meet changing needs.

Prizmah creates connections within the network of Jewish day schools and yeshivas, and can convene Israel educators to share what's working and learn about opportunities and partnerships.

The unity of the Jewish people today is a precious opportunity to invest in all forms of Jewish education. For day schools and yeshivas, we embrace our potential to deepen the love, knowledge, and relationships that will secure a future beyond these moments of tragedy.