

North American Jewish Day Schools' Online Promotion of Physical Education

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Objective: Parents and other stakeholders regularly view school websites for important information including curricula. Over 300,000 students are enrolled in North American Jewish day schools, but little is known about schools' online promotion of physical education (PE). We conducted a content analysis of the mention of various PE characteristics and their association with school characteristics. **Methods:** We systematically tallied mention of 7 PE characteristics and 4 school characteristics on the websites of 516 Jewish day schools located in 237 North American cities. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were used to analyze proportions for each characteristic and associations among them. **Results:** PE and curriculum were the only characteristics mentioned on over 50% of the websites. The mention of 4 PE characteristics (health messaging, facilities, PE, curriculum) was strongly associated with the religious affiliation of schools. Specifically, websites of liberal schools and traditional schools were more and less likely, respectively, to mention the characteristics. **Conclusions:** The websites of Jewish day schools insufficiently promoted PE characteristics with large differences based on religious affiliation. Surveying school officials responsible for website content about their beliefs on PE generally and the appropriateness of websites for promoting it may help inform strategies for boosting its online presence.

Key words: school physical education; school health policy; Jewish day schools; school websites; private schools; school religious affiliation

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Children between 6 and 17 years of age should engage in at least 60 minutes/day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA).¹ Youths who are sufficiently active have higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness, stronger muscles, lower body fat, and stronger bones than their inactive peers and a better chance of health in adulthood.² Enhanced cognitive processes and outcomes related to memory, executive function, processing speed, attention, and academic performance, and reduced symptoms of depression also have been noted.² Unfortunately, 20%-26% and 34%-39% of youth in the United States (US) and Canada, respectively, are insufficiently physically active.³

Various settings have been identified for coun-

teracting physical inactivity with schools demonstrating the most evidence for promoting and influencing youth physical activity.⁴ Indeed, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁵ ascribed schools a central role to combat physical inactivity by providing comprehensive school physical activity programs that include physical education (PE), before-, during-, and after-school physical activity programs, staff involvement, and family and community engagement components. Of these components, researchers estimated that mandatory PE policies resulted in 23 minutes/day of MVPA.⁶ Professional and governmental organizations have issued recommendations for minimum time allocations for PE (150 minutes/

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week in elementary schools and 225 minutes/week in secondary schools).^{5,7,8} Unfortunately, only 22 states have PE time allocation policies for either elementary or secondary schools, and of these 12 of 19 states' elementary school and 14 of 17 states' secondary school policies required less time than recommended.⁹

Much less is known about PE policies and practices in private schools. Among 450 private secondary schools in California, schools reported PE policies related to class size (12%), fitness testing and specialists teaching PE (each 30%), no exemptions from PE (36%), and time allocation (68%).¹⁰ In the US, 4.9 million students attended private schools in 2015-2016 with 6.1% (299,255 students) attending Jewish day schools.¹¹ By comparison in Canada, approximately 13,500 children attended Jewish elementary day schools in Montreal and Toronto alone in 2011.¹² Despite growing enrollments, research examining PE in Jewish day schools is exceedingly scarce. A multi-component 2-year intervention conducted in 2 Chicago Orthodox day schools, which included changes to PE and school environment resulted in a 20% increase in the proportion of students reporting engaging in one hour of physical activity 4 times/week.¹³

Members of the US Orthodox Jewish community often blame inadequate physical activity and excessive caloric intake for the rise in overweight/obesity rates,¹⁴ which were found to be 54% among children in one Jewish community health survey conducted in Chicago.¹⁵ Yet physical activity elicits an undertone of ambivalence in some Jewish circles, which effectively undermines optimal engagement in it. On the one hand, hermeneutic renderings of the Torah, Talmud, *Mishneh Torah*, *Shulchan Aruch*, and other sources dictate safeguarding the body (*shmirat ha'guf*) and sanction physical exercise, running, dancing, walking, ball playing, and swimming so long as laws governing observance of the Sabbath and holidays are not violated.¹⁶ Conversely, some qualify such behaviors as wasting time (*bitul Torah* and *bitul zman*) if they preempt learning and prayer or compromise modesty.¹⁷ Considering this equivocation, promoting and providing PE in Jewish day schools may prove complicated especially among ultra-Orthodox schools, which in New York were found to limit students' access

to general education studies that included PE.¹⁸ Nonetheless, practitioner authors affiliated with Prizmah schools (current network for Jewish day schools of all denominations across North America) touted PE as necessary for students' holistic development and for health and well-being.^{19,20}

Information about and promotion of PE can (should) be included on school websites.²¹ Internet use is *halachically* permissible and US Jews – including the ultra-Orthodox²² – engage in it to a great degree (already 40% in 2000) and for various purposes, including Jewish education.²³ School websites have been likened to windows through which visitors can view a school,²⁴ or among Jewish day schools, are considered digital front doors.²⁵ Schools use their websites to market and message information to target audiences, and thus, filter content to match Web visitors' interests – particularly parents.²⁶ Thus, school websites could serve as a powerful medium for promoting PE and conveying its importance and value in the overall school curriculum to an array of website visitors including current and prospective students and parents, and community and educational stakeholders. Indeed, a scoping review of 20 years of physical activity communication research found that websites were the most popular media channel used to promote physical activity.²⁷ Unfortunately, studies of US websites representing various school levels and types inadequately included information about PE.²⁸⁻³¹ Specifically, among public schools only 7% to 18% of their websites had a website or webpage dedicated to the PE department or program.^{28,31} Among charter and private schools, between 31% and 71% of their websites mentioned physical education/PE and between 5% and 55% provided details about PE related to curriculum, dosage, who teaches it, and their qualifications.^{29,30}

Whereas website content related to PE was found lacking in these studies, it may be even more pronounced on the websites of Jewish schools and it may differ by denominational affiliation. As a parallel example, Ackerman³² noted wide variation in the percentages of time spent on different themes at open houses for prospective students at 4 urban day schools affiliated with the Reform and Conservative Jewish movements. Specifically, statements about specialties (including PE) in Jewish day school marketing materials varied between 7% and 37% among

schools.³² If a schism also exists for websites, it might be pronounced between ultra-Orthodox and more liberal religious schools based on religiosity differences related to the relative importance attached to PE compared to Jewish studies.

The primary purpose of the current study was to complete a quantitative content analysis of North American Jewish day school websites to ascertain mentions of PE and related characteristics (facilities, health messaging, curriculum, dosage, PE teacher, lesson frequency, lesson duration). Secondly, we determined how the prevalence of these characteristics differed among schools based on their geographic climate, gender composition, grade levels, religiosity, and presence of a PE teacher.

METHODS

School Selection

We accessed 4 directories to assemble a total sampling universe of 1688 Jewish day schools in the US and Canada.³³⁻³⁶ Thereafter, we removed (1) schools that did not have a website, whose website link was broken, or whose website was essentially a "shell" (single page; pages devoted mainly to fundraising, pictures, or a larger entity such as a network of *chederim* or synagogues); and (2) schools that were closed, preschool/kindergarten only, post-secondary only, special education, and non-religious or supplemental (ie, Hebrew language, Sunday schools). Our resultant analytic example was comprised of 516 Jewish day schools that served one or more grades 1-12.

Data Curation and Reliability

We reviewed the websites during October-December 2018 starting with the homepage followed by subpages such as "About," "Admissions," "Academics," "Parents," "Students," "Campus Life," etc. Additionally, the "Search" field on the homepage and/or Ctrl+F were used to find information on the PE characteristics mentioned on a school's website.

The lead author, who previously had conducted several school website content analysis studies of PE, trained 9 student coders during 3 iterative one-hour group sessions. At the initial meeting, the study was explained, website navigation and search procedures were demonstrated on 4 websites, and coders were tested on definitions of characteristics

and coding procedures. At the second meeting, coders worked in pairs and independently coded 2-3 websites and compared results to the lead author with discrepancies identified and rectified. At the final meeting, 8 coders were assigned 50-60 websites to code and the ninth coder who had the highest inter-rater reliability served as the criterion for judging inter-rater reliability across the entire coded sample. Specifically, this ninth coder coded a 10% random sample of websites assigned to each of the other 8 coders and results for 49 websites were compared. Inter-rater reliability was calculated for mention of the following characteristics: PE ($\kappa = .73$), health messaging associated with PE/physical activity ($\kappa = .76$), facilities ($\kappa = .73$), curriculum ($\kappa = .66$), and PE teacher ($\kappa = .85$).

Data and Characteristics Definitions and Coding

Table 1 displays the school and PE characteristics considered when extracting data from the websites as well as secondary characteristics that were categorized/calculated from the extracted data (PE volume; geographic climate based on the state/province where the school was located).^{37,38} The mention of a PE teacher also served as a school characteristic because the presence of a PE teacher is positively associated with various PE website content.³⁹

Data Analysis

We used IBM SPSS Statistics 24 (Armonk, NY) to analyze data. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical data and means and standard deviations were calculated for continuous data. When the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality was statistically significant, medians and inter-quartile ranges (IQR) were calculated instead. Cross-tabulations and Pearson chi-square tests were conducted to determine the associations between presence (ie, mention) of PE characteristics and the 5 school characteristics. The Bonferroni correction was used to adjust p-value thresholds ($p < .01$) for statistical significance based on multiple comparisons. For 2 X 2 cross-tabulations (geographic climate, school composition) significant chi-square statistics were followed up by calculating odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals (CI). For 2 X 3 cross-tabulations (school level, school religiosity) significant chi-square statistics were explored post

Table 1
Variable Characteristics, Coding Conventions, and Operationalization

Characteristics	Coding	Description/Status based on
School		
Geographic climate	0 = Cold 1 = Warm	Median winter daily temperature for school province/state; “warm” versus “cold” cutoff set at 32.25° F
Student composition	0 = Coed 1 = Single sex	Verbiage or photos
School grade levels	0 = Elementary = grades 1-5 1 = Combined = grades 1-5 + grade(s) 6-12 2 = Secondary = grades 6-12	Verbiage regarding lowest and highest grade levels offered
Religiosity	0 = Liberal = Community, Reform, Conservative 1 = Centrist = Orthodox: Centrist, Modern, Montessori 2 = Traditionalist = Orthodox: Chabad, Immigrant & Outreach, Yeshiva	Religious affiliations as listed in “Heart to Heart”/“Prizmah” directories or based on default affiliation of a directory
Physical education		
Messaging	0 = No 1 = Yes	Verbiage linking PE/physical activity/exercise to any health outcome such as mood, weight, or disease risk
Facility	0 = No 1 = Yes (names of facility types also specifically noted)	Mention of physical activity facilities on school grounds
PE mentioned	0 = No 1 = Yes	Mention of ‘PE/physical education’ in prose (except ‘PE Teacher’)
PE curriculum	0 = No 1 = Yes	Elaboration of PE curriculum
PE teacher	0 = No 1 = Yes	Mention of a PE teacher by surname
PE specialist	0 = No 1 = Yes	Mention of PE teacher having a PE teaching credential or degree in PE/Kinesiology
PE frequency	0 = No 1 = Yes (class/week also specifically noted)	Mention of frequency of PE lessons
PE duration	0 = No 1 = Yes (min/class specifically noted)	Mention of duration of PE lessons
PE volume	Calculated if ‘Yes’ responses were recorded for both PE frequency and PE duration	Reported as min/week

hoc using percentage deviations between observed and expected cell frequencies and corresponding standardized residuals. Standardized residuals with an absolute value exceeding $z = 2.39$ were considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Sample Description

Schools ($N = 516$) available for the analytic sample were from 237 cities in 37 US states and 5 Cana-

dian provinces, with the largest proportions from the states of New York (21.7%), California (11.8%), New Jersey (8.7%), Florida (7.8%), and the province of Ontario (4.8%). Only one city – Brooklyn, New York (6.2%) – accounted for more than 5% of the sample. Grade level representations included combined (59.6%), secondary (25.6%), and elementary (14.8%) schools. Most schools were co-educational (74.2%) and all single-sex schools served combined or secondary school grade levels. The

Table 2
Descriptive Results of Website Mentions of Physical Education (PE) Information (N = 516)

Website mention of...	N	%	M (SD) or Mdn (IQR)
Health messaging	86	16.7	
Physical activity facility	137	26.6	
PE	305	59.1	
Location on website			
Principal's message	11	3.6	
<i>About Us</i> subtab	55	18.0	
Elsewhere only	239	78.4	
PE Curriculum	158	50.8	
PE teacher (by surname)	187	36.2	
PE specialist	38	7.4	
PE frequency (lessons/week)	75	14.5	2.0 (1.0)
PE duration (min/lesson)	18	3.5	42.5 (13.7)
PE volume (min/week)	16	3.1	103.7 (45.2)

religious affiliation of schools was balanced among liberal (34.7%), centrist (33.9%), and traditionalist (31.4%) denominations. Lastly, 36.2% of school websites mentioned a PE teacher by surname.

Descriptive Results

Table 2 presents descriptive results for the percentage of websites mentioning various PE characteristics. PE (59.1%) and curriculum (50.8%) were the only characteristics mentioned on over 50% of the websites. When mentioned, PE was more frequently on less prominent website locations (ie, not in the principal's message or listed in the *About Us* subtab). A PE teacher's surname was identified on just over one-third of websites; however, only about 20% of these provided credentialing information illustrating a PE specialist background. Messaging that linked PE, physical activity, or exercise to a health outcome or information regarding PE lesson frequency or duration were on less than 20% of all websites. When mentioned on websites, PE frequency (Mdn = 2.0 lessons/week) and volume (M = 103.7 minutes/week) fell below professional recommendations (ie, provided daily

with 150 minutes/week for elementary grades and 225 minutes/week for secondary grades).

With respect to physical activity facilities, 334 unique facilities were identified on 137 websites (Mdn = 2.0 ± 3.0 facilities when a website identified at least one). Among websites identifying at least one facility, combined grade level schools were most frequently represented (N = 94, 68.6%) followed by secondary (N = 23, 16.8%) and elementary (N = 20, 14.6%) schools. The 5 most frequently identified facilities within the school level groupings are shown in Figure 1. Overall, gyms were identified most frequently and were the only facility identified on over 50% of websites regardless of school level. Several facility types were prominent on websites relative to school level: soccer fields (elementary); and softball fields, tennis courts, and fitness facilities (secondary).

Associations between School and PE Characteristics

Table 3 presents results of cross-tabulation analyses between school and PE characteristics mentioned. Results of *post hoc* analyses indicated

Table 3
Results of Cross-tabulation and post hoc Analyses between School
and Physical Education (PE) Characteristics

School characteristic	PE characteristic	Significance	χ^2	p	ES	OR/ Percentage deviation ^a	95% CI/ z score ^b
Climate	Messaging	x	0.62	.43	—		
	Facilities	✓	11.00	.001	0.15	1.95	1.31 – 2.91
	PE	✓	7.44	.006	0.12	1.64	1.15 – 2.33
	Curriculum	x	1.13	.29	—		
Gender composition	Messaging	✓	12.66	< .001	0.16	3.47	1.69 – 7.13
	Facilities	x	2.78	.10	—		
	PE	✓	25.39	< .001	0.22	2.78	1.86 – 4.17
	Curriculum	✓	15.38	< .001	0.22	3.36	1.79 – 6.29
Grade levels	Messaging	x	5.50	.06	—		
	Facilities	x	8.12	.02	—		
	PE	x	8.12	.02	—		
	Curriculum	✓	12.85	.002	0.20	—	—
Religiosity	Messaging	✓	49.89	< .001	0.31	94.4% (L)/ -63.0% (T)	5.16 (L)/ -3.27 (T)
	Facilities	✓	17.45	< .001	0.18	41.0% (L)	2.82 (L)
	PE	✓	456	< .001	0.32	28.5% (L)/ -37.3% (T)	2.94 (L)/ -3.65 (T)
	Curriculum	✓	35.69	< .001	0.34	36.5% (L)/ -42.5% (T)	3.04 (L)/ -2.44 (T)
PE teacher	Messaging	✓	23.75	< .001	0.22	3.15	1.96 – 5.07
	Facilities	x	5.54	.02	—		
	PE	✓	48.71	< .001	0.31	4.16	2.75 – 6.29
	Curriculum	✓	11.28	.001	0.19	1.61	1.08 – 2.40

Note.

^a Only significant results for percentage deviations from post hoc tests are listed.

^b Only significant results for z scores from post hoc tests are listed (critical z threshold = ± 2.39).

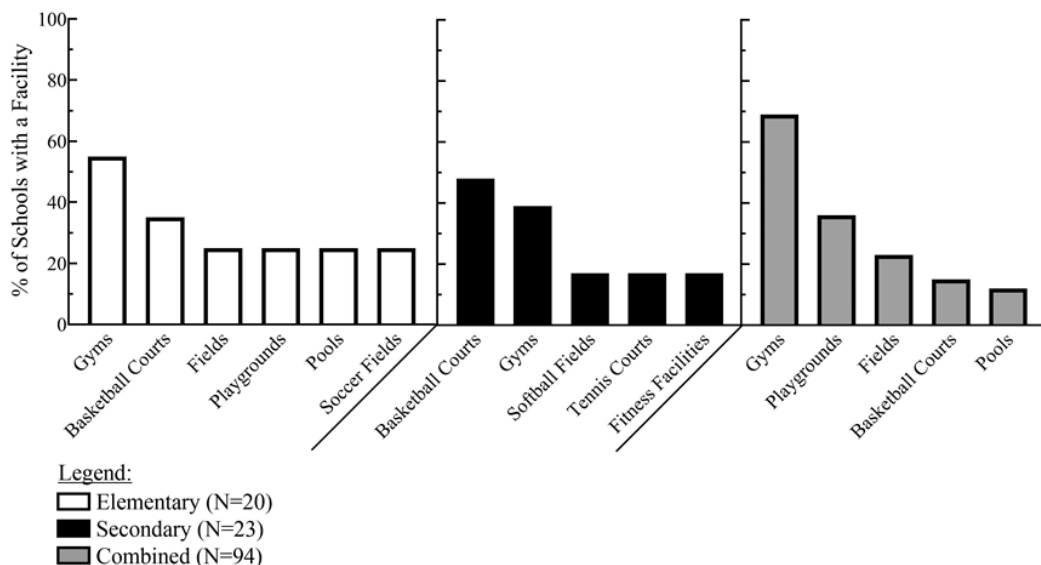
ES = effect size; L = Liberal; T = Traditionalist

multiple statistically significant associations for 4 of 5 school characteristics.

Compared to schools located in cold climates, the websites of those in warm climates were 1.6 and 2.0 times more likely to mention PE and a physical activity facility, respectively. Websites of coed schools were between 2.8 to 3.5 times more likely to mention health messaging, PE, and curriculum than single-sex schools. Websites of liberal religious schools mentioned health messaging,

physical activity facilities, PE, and curriculum between 28% and 94% more often than expected. In comparison, the websites of traditionalist religious schools mentioned health messaging, PE, and curriculum between 37% and 63% less frequently than expected. Lastly, the websites of schools mentioning having a PE teacher were between 1.6 and 4.2 times more likely to also mention curriculum, health messaging and PE than schools not mentioning having one.

Figure 1
Most Frequently Mentioned Physical Activity Facilities by School Level



DISCUSSION

Comparison to Other Website Content Analyses

Promotion of PE on the websites of Jewish day schools takes on added importance considering previous findings that the online promotion of sports (41%) and extracurricular physical activity (45% for intramural sports and physical activity clubs) occurred infrequently on the websites of Jewish day schools.⁴⁰ Previous analyses of public school websites in Alabama³¹ and southern California²⁸ examined the existence and content of only PE websites and webpages. In contrast, we assessed the content of entire school websites to examine them for messaging about PE characteristics – irrespective of the absence/presence of distinct PE webpages. Nonetheless, the moderate mention of PE (59%) and curriculum (51%) – the most frequently mentioned characteristics of 7 we examined – reinforce the conclusions of previous studies that (1) there is “continued need to create and maintain professional websites for all PE programs that are educational and can be used as a tool,”^{31(pp 193-194)} and (2) “most physical educators are not taking advantage of an educational tool that has great potential both to promote their department and aid in student

learning.”^{28(p 114)}

Compared to more recent studies examining entire school websites for the mention of PE characteristics, our findings for the prevalence of mentions by Jewish day schools were greater than those for 759 US charter schools on 3 of 4 characteristics (PE, curriculum, PE specialist),³⁰ 520 California charter schools on 4 of 5 characteristics (PE, curriculum, PE teacher, lesson frequency),²⁹ and 990 California private schools on one of 5 characteristics.²⁹ Interestingly, Jewish day schools fall into the latter category (ie, private schools), to which they compared least favorably. Nonetheless, Jewish day schools and private schools primarily aim to attract different market shares, and thus, do not compete directly. Thus, their promotion of various aspects of the school may be tailored to specific target groups – as found among charter school websites.²⁶ Subsequently, compared to Jewish day schools where less competition exists in recruiting students, other private schools may feel compelled to convey an impression of a more holistic educational environment to be competitive. Such a view could be accomplished in part by including information on PE, which is far rarer than online content dedicated to math and language arts.³⁰

Meanwhile, our study is the first to assess the mention of health messaging (17%) and physical activity facilities (27%) so no comparable data are available. We included health messaging content that directly linked PE or physical activity to a desirable health outcome because it is related to 2 national PE standards. In part, these state that a physically literate individual “demonstrates the knowledge...to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness” (Standard 3), and “recognizes the value of physical activity for health...” (Standard 5).⁴¹ Unfortunately, students’ health-related fitness knowledge is low at all grade levels⁴² despite positive associations between levels of such knowledge and physical activity.⁴³ Because PE teachers’ health-related fitness knowledge may not be associated with teaching and assessing it,⁴⁴ health messaging on school websites can supplement the gap.

Although only slightly more than one-fourth of websites identified a physical activity facility, those doing so identified over 330 facilities with a median of 2 facilities and wide variability (IQR = 3). Whereas we cannot determine reasons for websites not identifying facilities, we are heartened by the results for those that identified them. Overall, the most mentioned facility was a gymnasium and in a study of nearly 9000 5th graders, schools with gymnasiums provided 8 minutes/week more PE than schools without them. This difference increased 2- and 3-fold for schools located in hot-humid and mixed-humid climate zones.⁴⁵ Additionally, that most websites identifying any facilities identified more than one is consequential. The total number of facilities (ie, 2 vs1) – but not the type – was associated with the provision of additional PE.⁴⁶ Across our Jewish day schools, regardless of grade levels, websites mentioned activity-specific facilities such as basketball courts and pools. This is relevant because a systematic review found that the school provision of such facilities – regardless of total facility number – was positively associated with physical activity among adolescents.⁴⁷

PE and School Characteristics Associations

The websites of schools located in warm climates identified physical activity facilities and mentioned PE more frequently than those in cold climates. Perhaps schools in cold climates assumed viewers

know PE and physical activity can be conducted indoors during cold weather (ie, in a gymnasium), and therefore, did not feel it necessary to identify it or other physical activity facilities online. Indeed, researchers found that schools in Maine – depending on their temperature threshold cutoff policies – cancelled 10-68 days of outdoor physical activity during winter.⁴⁸ The heightened mention of PE on the websites of schools in warm climates was expected. For example, Fernandes and Sturm⁴⁵ found that schools in warm climate locales offered more PE (27-36 minutes/week) than those in cold climate zones.

The websites of schools did not differ on any PE characteristic based on their grade levels. This is encouraging because a study in 504 US secondary schools reported steep declines between 8th and 12th grades in the percentage of students required to take PE (87% vs 20%) and in the mean number of days/week they had PE.⁴⁹ Additionally, the number of states mandating a minimum number of PE minutes per week declines from 19 (elementary school) to 6 (high school).⁵⁰

Co-educational schools more frequently mentioned health messaging, PE, and curriculum than single-sex schools. This pattern was not unexpected because all the single-sex schools were affiliated religiously with either centrist or traditionalist denominations. Websites of traditionalist schools mentioned PE, curriculum, and health messaging less frequently (37%-63%) than expected, while those of liberal schools mentioned PE, curriculum, facilities, and health messaging more frequently (29%-94%) than expected. The writers and gatekeepers of website content may consider religious affiliations when tailoring their content and marketing to prospective families. In doing so, different curriculum aspects would be emphasized. For example, community day schools, which attract a broad swath of religious affiliations, might stress specific Judaic studies content (Talmud, Jewish law, Torah commentaries) to Orthodox parents⁵¹ and overall academic excellence and extracurricular activities to Conservative parents.⁵² In comparison, Orthodox centrist and traditionalist day schools might avoid promoting PE and physical activity in fear of parent and community censure for overstressing secular content versus Jewish studies or improving the body versus the mind. Indeed, PE

along with all other secular studies was found to be compromised in traditionalist day schools in New York City.⁵³

Meanwhile, centrist and traditionalist day schools draw limits for student participation in school sport and physical activity, especially when they are perceived to be interfering with Torah study, which takes priority.⁵⁴ These approaches and reactions are ironic, considering rabbinical rulings that permit and even encourage Jews to be physically active to safeguard their health and the stories of contemporary and renowned Orthodox rabbis partaking in regular exercise such as running, skipping rope, and swimming.⁵⁵

The websites of schools that mentioned a PE teacher versus those that did not were 1.6 to 4.2 times more likely to mention curriculum, health messaging, and PE. These findings parallel those from a content analysis of 990 California private elementary school websites that found mentioning a PE teacher versus not were approximately twice as likely to mention curriculum and have a PE-specific webpage.³⁹ These associations reinforce PE teachers' personal views that they are key figures in promoting their PE programs.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, scholars who propose a public health approach to PE, which is informed by the Whole School-Whole Community-Whole Child model and the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan, advocate for PE teacher training to include content that develops teachers' promotion, advocacy, and politicking skills.⁵⁷

Study Strengths and Limitations

Schools are an important contributor to physical activity, a factor related to current and future student health. Therefore, assessing factors related to PE in Jewish day schools is important because more than 300,000 students in North America attend them.

Our study extends previous systematic content analyses of school promotion of PE by inspecting North American Jewish day schools' websites. Two studies had previously examined the PE content of the websites of private elementary and charter schools in the US,^{29,30} but we also included Canadian schools, those at both the elementary and secondary grade levels, and 2 additional characteristics (health messaging and facilities) related to PE.

Whereas the study objectively assessed the con-

tent of a large sample of 516 Jewish day schools located in 237 North American cities that had a public website via highly trained and reliable data collectors, it has several limitations. First, the study was cross-sectional, and websites do not remain static. As well, studying website PE content permits conclusions to be made from online promotion efforts; however, the promotion of PE may occur in other ways (eg, verbally by teachers, administrators, and admissions personnel and via written or mediated marketing materials such as brochures). Additionally, the omission of PE content on websites does not mean that PE is not offered, nor do we know reasons for its omission.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH BEHAVIOR OR POLICY

Jewish day schools are private schools, and therefore, are included in *Healthy People 2020* Objective PA-4, which directs US public and private schools to provide daily PE to students at all grade levels. Globally, according to the World Health Organization (https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-promoting-schools#tab=tab_1), a health promoting school strives to provide its students with opportunities for physical education and recreation. Jewish day schools – particularly traditionalist schools – must accept that the provision of quality PE does not necessarily infringe on the Jewish studies curriculum. Therefore, PE should be promoted on school websites to inform current students/parents and via various media when narrowcasting school programs to select prospective students/parents – resources are available to guide the construction of quality PE websites.⁵⁸ In the absence of a dedicated PE webpage, we minimally recommend school websites prominently include information about the characteristics we investigated, including the mention of PE among the school's subject matter, PE dosage, health benefits of PE, PE teacher by name, PE curriculum overview, and PE facilities. To achieve this goal, school administrators need to be convinced that subject matter learning is strengthened by student engagement in PE. A systematic review of 16 intervention studies on the relationship of PE to student academic performance demonstrated that 48% of 52 skills and attitudes, academic behavior, and academic achievement outcomes were positively

associated with PE.⁵⁹ Yet, persuading traditionalist school administrators to promote PE may prove daunting due to religious and cultural beliefs acquired when they were younger and reinforced by the school community-at-large. Health educators working in these communities should hold dialogues with rabbis to identify their concerns and refute misconceptions. Such conversations are likely to be more productive if health educators enter them well-versed on rabbinic rulings that promote physical activity and even caution against excessive Torah learning at the expense of good health.^{16,17,55} Additionally, Prizmah – the umbrella network for Jewish day schools across North America – ought to generate a position statement or white paper on the role of PE and its promotion in day schools. Prizmah is not a policy body and affiliated schools are not bound to follow their guidelines; however, such action would place it at the vanguard of Jewish education as it pertains to student health.

Human Subjects Approval Statement

The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board approved the study (Protocol # 2660).

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

All authors of this article declare they have no conflicts of interest.

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