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“Boundary-Crossing Teachers:” A Possible Solution to Staffing Gaps in the Education System

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Policy Paper No. 04.2026

Jerusalem, March 2026

Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel

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Please cite this publication as:

Maagan, D., & Blass, N. (2026). *"Boundary-Crossing Teachers:" A Possible Solution to Staffing Gaps in the Education System*. Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18266429>

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“Boundary-Crossing Teachers:” A Possible Solution to Staffing Gaps in the Education System

David Maagan and Nachum Blass

Introduction

The Israeli education system is composed of four subsystems: State Hebrew, State-religious, Haredi, and State Arab education.¹ Any transition between them involves overcoming significant national and religious barriers. Transition into the State Hebrew education system is the least complex of all.

The movement of teachers from one subsystem to another can help address shortages in the teaching workforce, whether these are localized (in a specific school or for a specific taught-subject area) or systemic and ongoing. However, a substantial change in the balance between the value-based identity (religious and national) of students and that of their teachers in a school may have unforeseen and far-reaching effects.

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1 The Hebrew and Arab education systems are based on the supervisory authority and language of instruction. The Hebrew education sector includes Hebrew State, State-religious, and Haredi schools. The Arab sector includes Arab, Druze, and Bedouin education. The majority of students in Hebrew education can be assumed to be Jewish, and the majority students in the Arab sector can be assumed to be Arab Israelis. Nevertheless, the division by the Central Bureau of Statistics is based on the language of instruction and not the religion or sector of the students.

This study examines the scope of the phenomenon of boundary-crossing teachers — teachers who teach in schools belonging to a different sector or supervisory track from the one in which they were trained — between 2010 and 2025, from two perspectives:

1. The share of Arab boundary-crossing teachers (veteran and new) teaching in State Hebrew education institutions, out of all teachers.²
2. The share of boundary-crossing teachers out of all new teachers in the system, by the sectoral affiliation of the institution in which they received their teacher training. This analysis focuses on all boundary-crossing teachers, not only Arab teachers.

Literature review

From time to time, the question arises whether the surplus of teachers in the Arab sector could serve as a solution to the shortage of teachers in State Hebrew education.³ However, the academic engagement with this issue is relatively limited and is usually based on surveys with small numbers of respondents. A study based on administrative data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and published by the Taub Center (Blass, 2014) found that the share of Arab teachers teaching in the Jewish sector is negligible, and that the number of Jewish teachers teaching in the Arab sector is even smaller. A survey conducted by Erlich Ron and Gindi (2021) among 57 Arab teachers teaching in Jewish schools and 103 Arab teachers teaching in Arab schools found that Arab teachers teaching in Jewish schools exhibit more multicultural perceptions than their counterparts teaching in Arab schools, and that they adopt different tactics to cope with difficulties stemming from differences in background, culture, and the political reality. In an open in-depth interview study with 28 Arab teachers (Halabi & Faour, 2021), these teachers were found to experience social and political difficulties: they described feelings of condescension on the part of school management and fellow teachers, loneliness, and a sense of split

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- 2 Very few Jewish teachers teach in State Arab education institutions, and there are almost no Arab teachers in State-religious or Haredi education.
 - 3 A small number of studies have also examined the presence of Arab students in State Hebrew education schools. This is a separate issue, raising complex questions both for Arab students and for Jewish students.

identity, particularly during national holidays observed at the school. In order to retain their jobs, they coped with these feelings primarily through restraint. Kharanbeh (2022) interviewed 10 teachers and found that the main obstacles they faced were limited proficiency in Hebrew and tensions on a national-ethnic basis.

The small number of studies on teachers whose religious orientation differs from that of the majority of students in the school is surprising, given that many Haredi teachers teach in State-religious education with is a small proportion that is growing even in State Hebrew schools. Two researchers examined the level of personal well-being of Haredi teachers teaching in State-religious schools and found it to be lower than that of Haredi teachers teaching in Haredi schools, a factor that may affect their persistence in these workplaces (Barth & Benoliel, 2021). Two other researchers who studied Haredi teachers teaching in State-religious schools reached similar conclusions (Chassida & Rotenberg, 2022).⁴ Feinberg (2014) found that religious teachers in secular high schools perceive themselves as agents of change and aspire to shape their students’ identities. Erlich Ron and Gindi, who examined boundary-crossing religious teachers teaching in State Hebrew education institutions, found that these teachers viewed themselves as representatives of their communities (Erlich Ron & Gindi, 2020; 2021).

Integration of Arab teachers into State Hebrew education

Although, on the face of it, employing Arab teachers in State Hebrew education seems like an appropriate solution both to surpluses in the Arab sector and to shortages in the Hebrew sector, the challenges involved in employing Arab teachers in Hebrew education are very substantial — whether due to objective language and cultural difficulties or due to parental opposition that is not always related to the Arab teachers’ characteristics or professionalism. Opposition to employing Arab teachers in Jewish schools remains deeply entrenched. The president of Sakhnin College, which carried out a pilot program training Arab teachers to integrate into Jewish schools, said in this context: “Jewish society is

4 All of these studies used a case-study approach and examined only a small number of teachers. We did not find any study on Haredi teachers teaching in state education institutions or on religious teachers teaching in Haredi education institutions.

willing to accept the Arab pharmacist who provides it with medicine, and the Arab surgeon and doctor who heal its patients, but it is still not willing to accept the Arab teacher who will educate its children” (Trabelsi-Hadad, 2025).

Opposition is especially pronounced in the religious sector, even though the extent of Arab teachers’ integration there is negligible. The intensity of this opposition can be seen in the title of a magazine feature which to a large extent reflects views common in the State-religious sector: “A troubling exposé: How thousands of Arab teachers entered Jewish schools to teach.” The subheading elaborates: “Parents who discovered that their child’s homeroom teacher is Arab; classes in a State-religious school learning with Arab teachers; and a system that encourages and pushes for the integration of teachers into Jewish schools. What led to this absurd situation, and is there a way to prevent it?” (Arieli, 2024).⁵

In light of these points, it is important to examine the data in Table 1, which presents the integration of Arab teachers into State Hebrew education. According to the data, the share of Arab teachers currently teaching in State Hebrew education is no longer negligible, standing at 4% of all teachers teaching in this track (and at about 7% among new teachers). The pace at which Arab teachers are joining State Hebrew education has also been steadily increasing and has doubled over the past three years. It can be assumed that if the teacher shortage in State Hebrew education deepens, this pace will accelerate further.

5 The article noted that the Ministry of Education reported that in 2024, only 14 Arab teachers taught in State-religious schools.

Table 1. Integration of Arab teachers into State Hebrew education

	Arab teachers in State Hebrew education — total	Percent out of all teachers in State Hebrew education	Of them: New teachers	Percent out of new teachers in State Hebrew education
2010	343	0.6	64	2.1
2011	418	0.6	81	1.8
2012	491	0.7	84	1.7
2013	533	0.8	60	1.1
2014	604	0.8	78	1.5
2015	675	0.9	101	1.9
2016	1,104	1.3	288	3.9
2017	1,253	1.5	202	3.0
2018	1,435	1.6	211	3.2
2019	1,609	1.8	230	3.6
2020	2,013	2.1	396	5.5
2021	1,683	1.9	329	5.2
2022	2,065	2.3	397	6.3
2023	2,703	2.9	628	9.1
2024	3,108	3.3	514	7.5
2025	3,984	4.0	468	6.9

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

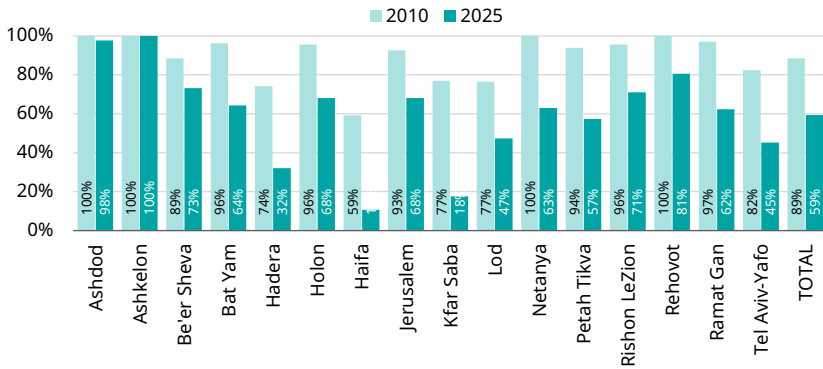
The phenomenon of Arab teachers’ integration into Jewish schools can also be seen in Figures 1 and 2, which describe the share of schools in which Arab teachers teach, by locality. Figure 1 presents the share of schools with no Arab teachers at all, and Figure 2 presents the share of schools with two or more Arab teachers.

Figure 1 highlights that between 2010 and 2025, the share of schools with no Arab teachers declined in all the localities examined, except Ashkelon. Nationwide, the share fell from 89% to 59%.

Figure 2 shows that during these years, the share of schools with two or more Arab teachers increased in all the localities examined, except Bat Yam. The leading cities are Haifa, where, in 2025, the share stood at 83% (compared to 6% in 2010), and Kfar Saba, where the share of schools with two or more Arab teachers stood at 71% (compared to 8% in 2010). Nationwide, the share rose

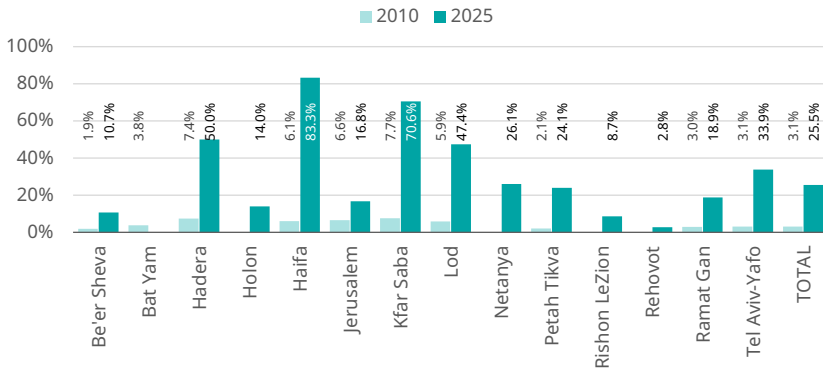
from 3% to 26%.

Figure 1. Share of local schools that do not employ Arab teachers, 2010 and 2025



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

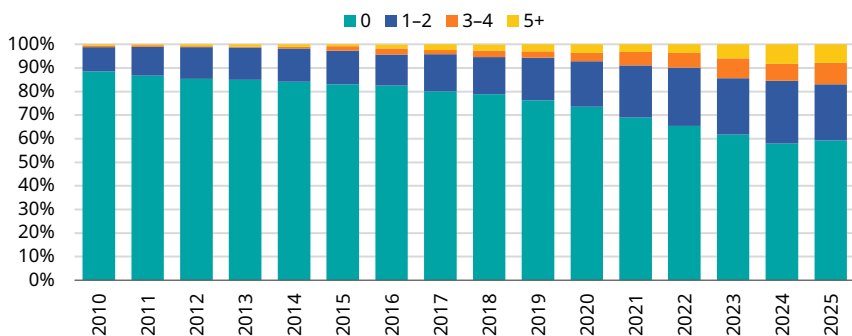
Figure 2. Share of local schools that employ two or more Arab teachers, 2010 and 2025



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Figure 3 indicates the extent of Arab teachers' integration into State Hebrew education in large localities, by the number of such teachers in each school. It shows that in 2010 there were almost no Jewish schools with three or more Arab teachers, whereas in 2025 more than 15% of schools fell into this category (and in half of these there were five or more Arab teachers).

Figure 3. Share of State Hebrew schools that employ Arab teachers, by number of Arab teachers in their employment, 2010–2025

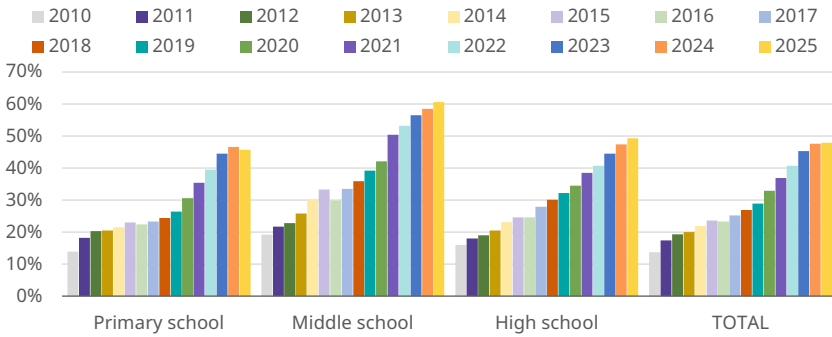


Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Integration of Arab teachers by education level

The education level with the highest share of schools employing Arab teachers is middle school (Figure 4). High schools follow, and primary schools rank last. The differences are likely due to the share of subjects in which cultural and ideological differences are more salient at each education level. An examination by district (Figure A3 in the Appendix) shows that the Haifa and Northern Districts had the highest share of schools employing at least one Arab teacher (close to 80%), whereas the Southern District had the lowest share, despite having a large Bedouin population.

Figure 4. Share of schools employing at least one Arab teacher, 2010–2025

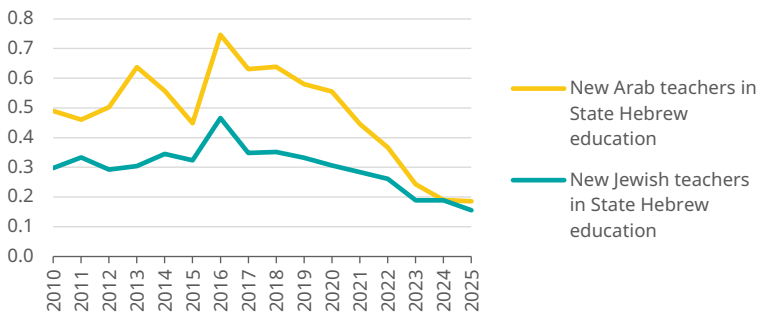


Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Integration of Arab teachers by their average Bagrut score

Figure 5 describes the educational attainment of new Arab teachers in State Hebrew education — where most Arab teachers integrated into Jewish schools are employed — compared with their Jewish counterparts. As shown, the average Bagrut score of Arab teachers is higher than that of Jewish teachers, but the gaps between them narrow over time.

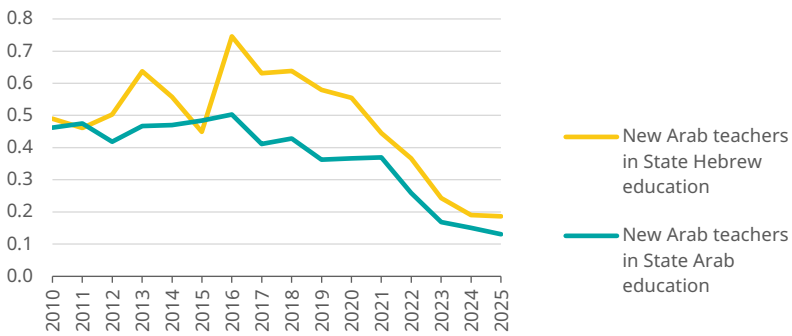
Figure 5. New Jewish and Arab teachers in State Hebrew education, by their average Bagrut score (standardized)



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

When examining the educational attainment of new Arab teachers teaching in State Hebrew education compared with that of those teaching in State Arab education (Figure 6), their Bagrut scores are found to be higher, but the gap between the two groups narrows over time. Another notable finding emerging from Figures 5 and 6 is the decline in Bagrut scores among new Arab teachers — both those teaching in State Arab education and those teaching in Hebrew education. One possible explanation is that in the past, the Arab teachers absorbed into Hebrew education were the very top among Arab teachers, but as their rates of entry into teaching in Hebrew education increased, the gap narrowed.

Figure 6. New Arab teachers in Arab and State Hebrew education, by their average Bagrut score (standardized)



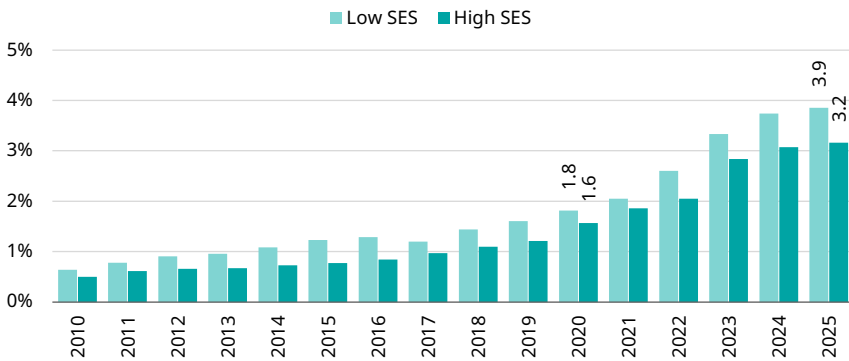
Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Integration of Arab teachers by student socioeconomic level

Throughout the study period, there has been a noticeable increase in the recruitment of Arab teachers in State Hebrew education, both in schools serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds and in those serving students from stronger backgrounds. However, as shown in Figure 7, the scale of recruitment is greater in schools serving students from low socioeconomic backgrounds: in 2025, the proportion of Arab teachers in these schools was 3.9%, compared to 3.2% in schools with students from a stronger background. In certain years,

these gaps were very significant (during almost the entire period between 2010 and 2016), while in other years they were narrower (for example, in 2018 and 2021). We do not have a satisfactory explanation as to why schools serving more advantaged populations are less inclined to recruit Arab teachers. It may be that teacher shortages in these schools are smaller because they find it easier to recruit the teachers they want, as teachers prefer to work there. It is also possible that in these schools parental opposition to the employment of Arab teachers is more effective.

Figure 7. Share of Arab teachers in State Hebrew education, by student SES level

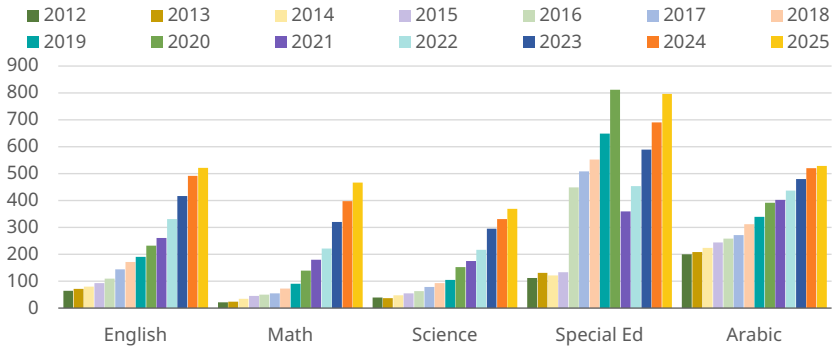


Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Integration of Arab teachers by the taught subjects

In 2025, most Arab teachers employed in State Hebrew education taught subjects considered to be shortage subjects. The increase in their numbers is especially pronounced in mathematics, where the number of Arab teachers grew twenty-three-fold between 2012 and 2025, from about 20 to around 470, as well as in special education, where their number grew almost eight-fold — from about 110 teachers in 2012 to approximately 800 teachers in 2025.

Figure 8. Number of Arab teachers in State Hebrew education, by the taught subjects



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

The relationship between the share of Arab teachers in schools and Bagrut achievements

Table 2 presents findings from an institution-level regression model describing the relationship between several variables — including the share of Arab teachers in the school — and students' achievement on the Bagrut (matriculation) examinations. The results indicate that, based on the standardized coefficient, the students' socioeconomic index at the school is the variable with the most pronounced contribution to average Bagrut scores ($\beta = 0.544$). School size, measured by the number of students, and the average number of students per teacher also contribute to students' Bagrut achievement. Some geographic districts and the share of Arab teachers in the school also make a statistically significant contribution, but the contribution of these variables is relatively small. On the basis of this model, there is no indication of a negative relationship between the share of Arab teachers in a school and Bagrut achievement. If any relationship exists, it is a weak positive one.

Table 2. Regression model results: Estimation results for the factors explaining the average Bagrut score at the school level

	Coefficient	Significance level	Adjusted coefficient
Constant	75.782	<.0001	—
Student SES	4.409	<.0001	0.544
Average students per teacher	0.083	<.0001	0.136
School size (number of students)	0.017	<.0001	0.166
Jerusalem District	2.571	<.0001	0.086
Northern District	0.628	0.10	0.022
Haifa District	-0.040	0.92	-0.001
Center District	1.649	<.0001	0.068
Tel Aviv District	1.454	<.0001	0.062
Percent of Arab teachers in the school	0.197	<.0001	0.076
Number of observations	5341		
R ²	0.4232		

Note: The model examines high schools in State Hebrew education, 2010–2023.

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

In summary, the integration of Arab teachers into State Hebrew education is no longer a negligible phenomenon. Their share among all teachers rose from less than 1% in 2010 to 4% in 2025, and their share among new teachers increased from about 2% in 2010 to approximately 7% in 2025. Even in State-religious education, a small number of Arab teachers are employed. This development should be viewed positively for several reasons. First, these teachers help address teacher shortages without harming achievement levels; second, their integration into teaching staffs may contribute to reducing prejudice and promoting a reality of coexistence and tolerance; third, when they return to teach in State Arab education institutions, they can serve as a cultural bridge between Jewish society and their own; and finally, the content and teaching methods to which these teachers were exposed in the Jewish sector can be used to advance education in the Arab sector.

Integration of new teachers into a teaching sector different from their training sector

When the State Education Law was enacted in 1953, legislators likely assumed that State Hebrew education would be secular and liberal, and perhaps even guided by a socialist worldview, given that at the time parties claiming to represent workers' ideologies from the left side of the political map (Mapai and Mapam) were in power. They also assumed that parents would generally send their children to schools where the teachers hold a set of views and beliefs that align with their own worldview. These assumptions held during the State's early decades, but they no longer hold today, as State Hebrew education reflects — both in the eyes of the students who attend it and of the teachers who teach in it — a much more diverse reality. Today, State Hebrew education schools exhibit the greatest diversity of teachers and students in every respect, enrolling students and teachers from secular, traditional, and religious households — Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, and Bedouins. This is not the case in State-religious schools, where students largely come from religious households across the religious spectrum, and most teachers are religious; however, a substantial share are Haredi or traditional teachers who received their training in Haredi institutions or in State Hebrew education institutions. In the Arab sector, almost all students are Arab, and teachers are Arab as well, but most were trained in State Hebrew education institutions.

We now focus exclusively on new teachers who have entered the system since 2010, as only from that year onward we have data covering most of the population.⁶ Before turning to a description of the data on the match between the institution in which teachers were trained and the institution in which they teach, it is important to point to the current situation and to emerging trends in the number of teacher-training students in teacher education institutions, by sector and supervisory track.

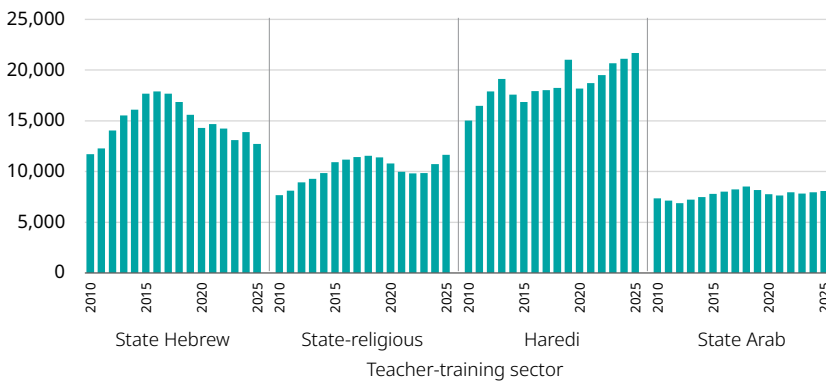
Figure 9 clearly shows that the number of Jewish students in State Hebrew education training institutions has declined in recent years, while the number of Arab students has remained stable. The number of students in State-religious

6 For the share of new teachers out of all teachers, by teaching sector and teacher-training sector, see Figure A2 in the Appendix. Teachers who joined the system before 2010 were trained in universities, State Hebrew colleges, the Open University, abroad, or in other frameworks.

teacher-training institutions has also remained fairly stable, but the number studying in Haredi teacher-training institutions has been growing rapidly.

If trends in other recruitment channels for teaching (such as job fairs, programs for retraining academics, and internal mobility) resemble those observed in the dedicated teacher-training institutions, it can be assumed that the need to recruit teachers trained in other sectors will continue to grow — particularly in State Hebrew education. If the scope of recruitment of such teachers does indeed expand, it is important to bear in mind that even if their professional quality is no lower than that of teachers trained in State Hebrew education institutions, this development will have a substantial impact on the character of State Hebrew education.

Figure 9. Volume of teacher training by training sector



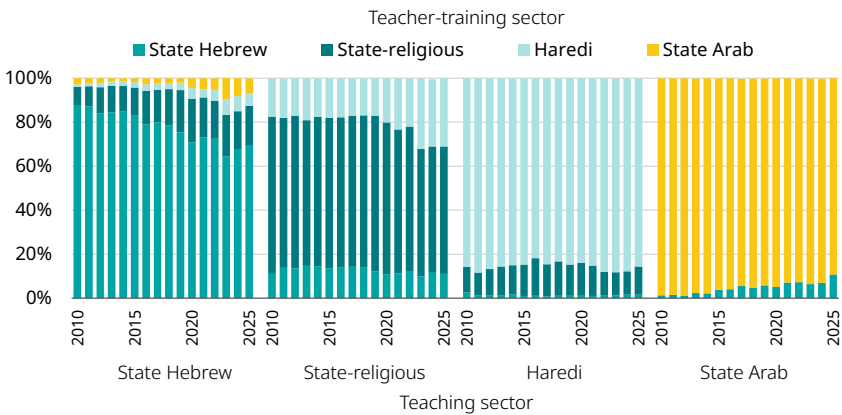
Note: Includes academics who underwent retraining for teaching. The Arab training sector includes Arab students studying in State Hebrew teacher-training institutions.

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

A close look at Figure 10 shows that in State Hebrew education, the share of new teachers who received their training in State Hebrew education institutions fell sharply from 87.5% in 2010 to 69.3% in 2025. In contrast, over the same years the share of teachers trained in State-religious institutions rose from 8.6% to 18.2%, and the share of teachers from the Arab sector rose from 2.8% to

7%.⁷ Even the share of teachers trained in Haredi institutions increased in this sector, from 1.2% to 5.6%. Assuming that principals would generally prefer to hire teachers trained in institutions whose character aligns with the lifestyle of most students' parents, we can infer that principals in State Hebrew education departed from this practice because they had difficulty recruiting teachers trained in State Hebrew education institutions. Since a substantial number of religious and traditional teachers study in State Hebrew teacher-training institutions, it is not unreasonable to estimate that about 30%–40% of the new teachers teaching in State Hebrew education — at least those hired over the past five years — belong to some religious sector or to the Arab sector.⁸

Figure 10. Share of new teachers in the education system, by teaching sector and teacher-training sector



Note: Teachers trained in academic education colleges or Haredi seminaries.

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

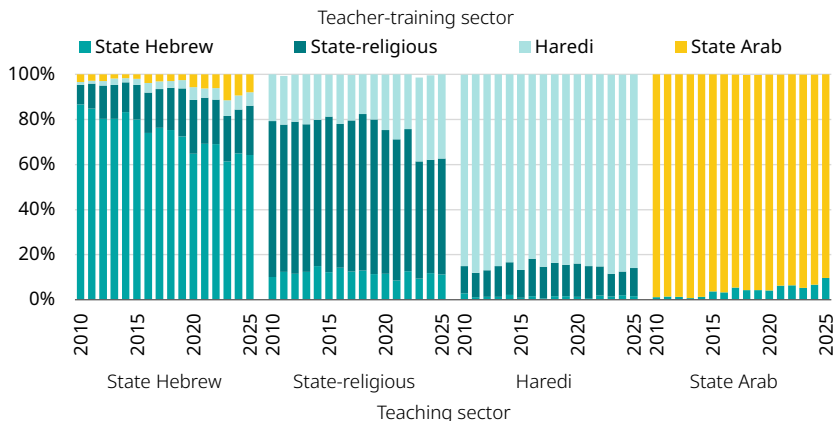
- 7 Teachers from the Arab sector include those who studied in Arab teacher-training institutions as well as those who studied in State Hebrew teacher-training institutions. In contrast, we cannot identify which of the teachers who studied in State Hebrew institutions are religious; therefore, when we refer to "boundary-crossing teachers," we mean only teachers who studied in State-religious institutions or in Haredi seminaries. The share of religious teachers who received their training in State Hebrew teacher-training institutions can be inferred from the fact that about 10% of teachers in State-religious education received their training in State Hebrew training institutions.
- 8 We leave it to readers to assess how this fact affects the educational and ideological climate in schools, and the positions that teachers' unions take on this issue in educational and political debates.

In State-religious schools as well, the share of teachers trained in institutions belonging to that sector has declined. In 2010, about 19% of teachers in these schools were trained in Haredi institutions and about 11% in State Hebrew institutions; by 2025, the share of new teachers trained in Haredi institutions had reached 31%, while the share of those trained in State Hebrew education institutions remained unchanged. Even if we assume that all teachers who studied in State Hebrew teacher-training institutions were religious or traditional, the fact that nearly one-third of new teachers in State-religious education belong to the Haredi sector may, over the long term, affect the educational character of schools in this sector.

In Haredi education and in State Arab education, the share of boundary-crossing teachers is relatively negligible. In Haredi education, the share of teachers who studied in Haredi seminaries has remained fairly stable throughout the period and stands at about 89%, while the remaining teachers teaching in this sector were trained in State-religious institutions. In State Arab education, the share of Arab teachers has remained stable at at least 97%.

Different education levels vary in the extent of the boundary-crossing phenomenon. In primary education, the phenomenon is especially prevalent. As shown in Figure 11, in 2025, only two-thirds of new teachers in State Hebrew education received their training in State Hebrew institutions (which, as noted, also enroll religious and traditional teachers). In the same year, about 40% of teachers in State-religious education studied in Haredi training institutions. In Haredi education, the share remained stable: about 12% of teachers studied in State-religious training institutions, and a very small minority — about 1%–2% — were trained in State Hebrew institutions. In State Arab education, almost all teachers studied in state training institutions, Hebrew or Arab.

Figure 11. Share of new teachers in primary education, by teaching sector and teacher-training sector



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

The phenomenon is less prevalent in middle school, and even less so in high school (see Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix); however, even in high school State-religious education, 10% of teachers received their training in Haredi training institutions. These are very likely teachers of Judaic studies.

Which subjects do new boundary-crossing teachers teach?

Boundary-crossing teachers teach most subjects. Table 3 indicates that the phenomenon is especially prevalent in State-religious education, where only 69% of Hebrew teachers, 70% of mathematics teachers, and 61% of English teachers received their training in State-religious teacher-training institutions. In State Hebrew education, the phenomenon is somewhat less prevalent: 75%–77% of teachers in these three subjects received their training in State Hebrew training institutions. In Haredi education, the share of boundary-crossing teachers is about 20% in each subject, while in State Arab education, among the few boundary-crossing teachers employed in the sector, most teach Hebrew.

Table 3. Distribution of training sector among new teachers of language arts (Hebrew), mathematics, and English (as a second language), by teaching sector

Subject	Teaching sector	Training sector			
		State Hebrew	State-religious	Haredi	State Arab
Language arts (Hebrew)	State Hebrew	76.6	17.3	3.7	2.5
	State-religious	11.3	69.0	19.4	0.3
	Haredi	1.0	17.6	81.4	0.1
	State Arab	10.7	0.4	—	88.9
Mathematics	State Hebrew	76.1	17.1	2.4	4.4
	State-religious	11.5	70.0	18.3	0.2
	Haredi	1.9	19.4	78.6	—
	State Arab	3.7	—	—	96.3
English (as a second language)	State Hebrew	75.5	13.8	2.1	8.6
	State-religious	16.6	60.6	22.4	0.4
	Haredi	1.5	16.4	82.1	—
	State Arab	3.1	—	—	96.8

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

The relationship between the share of new boundary-crossing teachers in a school and Bagrut achievement

Table 4 presents findings from a preliminary regression model describing the relationship between several variables, including the share of teachers by training sector, and students’ Bagrut exam achievement in State Hebrew education. The table indicates that, based on the standardized coefficient, the students’ socioeconomic index at the school is the variable with the most pronounced contribution to the school’s average Bagrut score ($\beta = 0.569$). School size, measured by the number of students, and, in some cases, geographic districts also affect students’ Bagrut achievement. In addition, a significant negative relationship was found between the average number of students per teacher and Bagrut achievement. The share of teachers trained in the State-religious sector has no effect on Bagrut achievement. A negative

relationship was found between the share of teachers trained in a Haredi training institution and Bagrut achievement, while a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between the share of teachers trained in an Arab training institution and Bagrut achievement. Thus, although the shares of Haredi and Arab teachers in State Hebrew education are very small, they appear to be associated with Bagrut scores — positively for Arab-trained teachers and negatively for Haredi-trained teachers.

Table 4. Regression model results: Estimation results for the factors explaining the average Bagrut score at the school level in State Hebrew education

	Coefficient	Significance level	Adjusted coefficient
Constant	77.642	<.0001	—
Student SES	4.689	<.0001	0.569
Average students per teacher	-1.595	<.0001	-0.208
School size (number of students)	0.024	<.0001	0.242
Jerusalem District	1.701	<.0001	0.056
Northern District	0.038	0.919	0.001
Haifa District	-0.534	0.164	-0.018
Center District	1.311	<.0001	0.054
Tel Aviv District	1.330	<.0001	0.057
Percent of teachers from religious training sector	0.006	0.738	0.004
Percent of teachers from Haredi training sector	-0.255	<.0001	-0.044
Percent of teachers from Arab training sector	0.603	<.0001	0.106
Number of observations	5,020		
R ²	0.4876		

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Table 5 presents the relationship between the same variables in State-religious education. The table shows that, based on the standardized coefficient, here, too, the students' socioeconomic index at the school is the variable with the strongest contribution to the school's average Bagrut score ($\beta = 0.58$). School size, measured by the number of students, and, in some cases, geographic districts (in this case, the Southern District) also contribute to students' Bagrut achievement. A negative relationship is found between the average number of students per teacher and Bagrut achievement. There is also a negative relationship between the share of teachers trained in State Hebrew education institutions (relative to the share trained in State-religious institutions) and Bagrut achievement. No relationship is found between the share of teachers trained in Haredi institutions and Bagrut achievement.

Table 5. Regression model results: Estimation results for the factors explaining the average Bagrut score at the school level in State-religious education

	Coefficient	Significance level	Adjusted coefficient
Constant	84.111	<.0001	—
Student SES	4.536	<.0001	0.580
Average students per teacher	-0.914	<.0001	-0.062
School size (number of students)	0.049	<.0001	0.183
Jerusalem District	3.135	<.0001	0.150
Northern District	2.351	<.0001	0.083
Haifa District	3.430	<.0001	0.096
Center District	2.327	<.0001	0.098
Tel Aviv District	1.320	0.004	0.050
Percent of teachers from State Hebrew training sector	-0.105	<.0001	-0.081
Percent of teachers from Haredi training sector	-0.032	0.183	-0.019
Number of observations	3,144		
R ²	0.4484		

Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Conclusion

In this study, we analyzed the phenomenon of boundary-crossing teachers in the Israeli education system. The findings present a fairly clear picture: In recent years, the number of teachers working in an education sector different from the one in which they were trained has been growing, and now accounts for at least 10% of teachers in the system. The trend is especially pronounced in Hebrew State education, whether in the case of Arab teachers working in Hebrew State schools or new teachers teaching in a sector different from the one in which they were trained. State-religious education is less diverse, and the teachers who work in it differ from one another mainly in their level of religiosity; State Arab education and Haredi education are fairly homogeneous — whether in religious terms, ethnic terms, or in terms of the teacher-training sector of the teachers. By education level, the phenomenon is most pronounced in primary education, and it is far more common today than it was 15 years ago. In our assessment, the reason is the difficulty of recruiting new teachers trained in institutions that match the character of the school, both in State Hebrew education and in State-religious education.

Either way, it appears that integrating boundary-crossing teachers into school teaching staff without any substantial harm to academic achievement is a sustainable practice, which can serve as a possible solution to teacher shortages when they exist. The many reports of teacher shortages suggest reluctance to adopt this solution and concern about an undesirable impact on a school's ability to educate its students in line with its stated character and the wishes of students' parents. However, it is worth noting that recruiting boundary-crossing teachers into schools also has an important positive social dimension, beyond the possibility of overcoming teacher shortages. The integration of teachers from a different cultural background can provide students and teaching staff with an opportunity to be exposed to other groups in society and to become familiar with a different culture. Such exposure can help bridge divides, promote multiculturalism, and foster tolerance and coexistence within the education system.

References

English

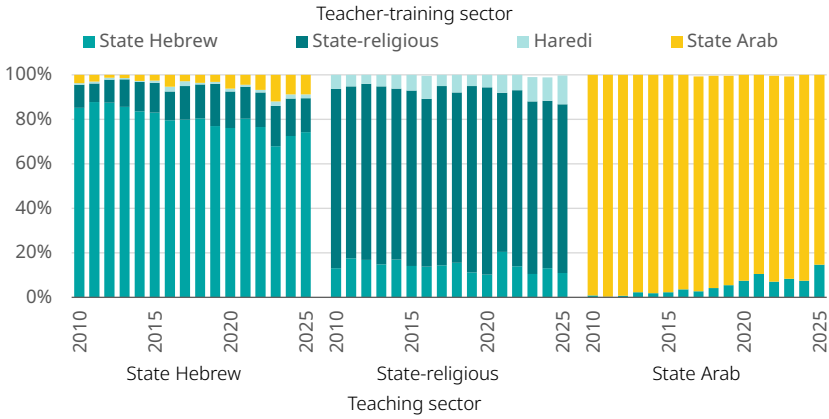
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Appendix

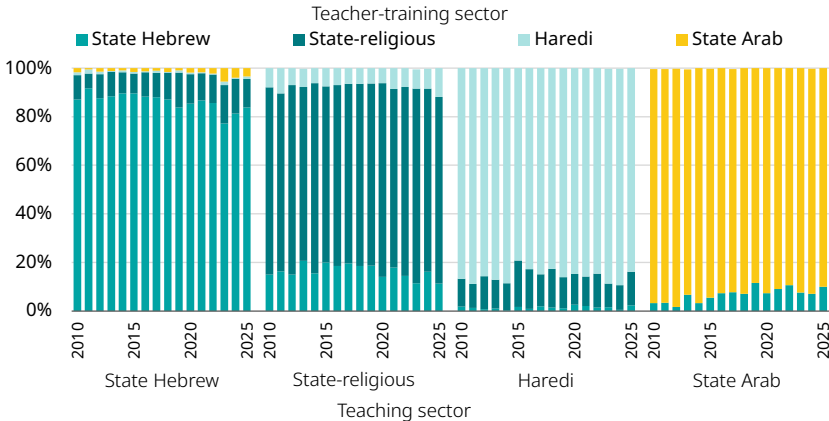
Figure A1. Share of new teachers in middle schools, by teaching sector and teacher-training sector



Note: Haredi education does not appear in the graph because there is no middle school in this sector.

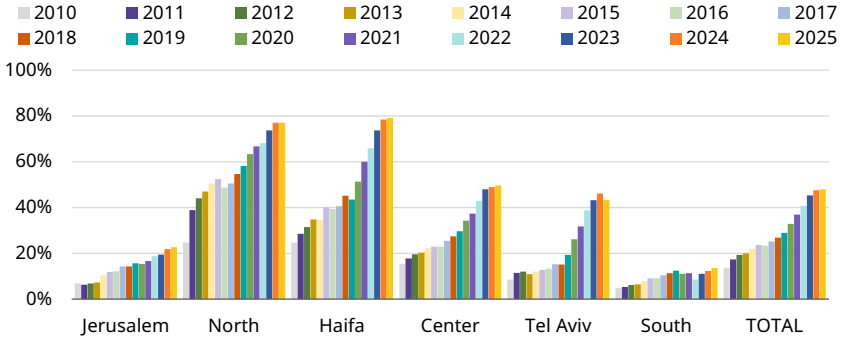
Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Figure A2. Share of new teachers in high schools, by teaching sector and teacher-training sector



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)

Figure A3. Share of schools that employer fewer than one Arab teacher, by district, 2010–2025



Source: David Maagan, CBS, and Nachum Blass, Taub Center | Data: CBS (special data handling)