

## REPORT: WIDENING GAP BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN PUPILS AND OTHER ISRAELIS ISRAELI SOCIETY

EDUCATION MINISTRY REPORT FINDS THE LARGEST GAPS AMONG THE OLDEST PUPILS TESTED, THOSE IN EIGHT GRADE, WHILE THE GAPS AMONG YOUNGER STUDENTS TESTED, IN FIFTH AND SECOND GRADE, WERE SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER



The large academic gap between pupils from the Ethiopian community and other Israelis only widens as the children get older, according to a new Education Ministry report.

The report, by the ministry's National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education, was compiled by analyzing the results of the International Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and the results of the national Meitzav achievement tests, which focus on Mathematics, Hebrew, English, and Science & Technology.

The Meitzav tests revealed that the largest gaps were found among the oldest pupils tested, those in eight grade, while the gaps among younger students tested, in fifth and second grade, were significantly smaller.

According to the international PISA tests, the difference between the Ethiopian community pupils and other pupils in Hebrew-speaking schools is more than a standard deviation, in all three areas tested - reading, mathematics and science. The Ethiopian community pupils scored 118 points lower in math, 111 points lower in reading and 116 points lower in science, than their Israeli peers.

Sixty percent of the pupils defined by the Education Ministry as "originating from Ethiopia," are actually Israeli-born, while only 40 percent of the children from the group were born in Ethiopia.

A comparison between those pupils actually born in Ethiopia with other Israelis reveals even greater gaps: 145 points in math, 143 points in reading and 152 points in science. Significant gaps were also found when comparing Ethiopian community children to other groups from low socio-economic groups - 55 points in reading, and 63 points in math.

The report concluded that "the gaps in the Meitzav tests between Ethiopian community pupils and other pupils in Hebrew-speaking schools are huge - especially large gaps can be found in the eighth grade."

The results of the Meitzav tests indicate that the more years the pupils spend in the educational system, the larger the gaps become. The largest discrepancies are in Hebrew and math, even though the gaps have slightly narrowed in the past two years, specifically among fifth and second grade pupils. Still, the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education's report ends with a gloomy conclusion: "It's hard to point to any significant change in the trend throughout the years." According to the Education Ministry's data, the 35,000 Ethiopian community pupils account for three percent of all pupils. Some 14,000 of them were born in Ethiopia. Fifty-three percent of those pupils study in national-religious state schools, 44 percent in secular state schools and 3 percent in Haredi schools.

By Talila Nesher

### Nishmat Ethiopian Women (N.E.W.) Students:

- 90% gain college acceptance
- According to a Myers-JDC Brookdale study, nationwide only 15% of Ethiopian-Israelis with Academic degrees obtain jobs in their fields. In a typical class, 60-80% of Nishmat graduates work in their field.
- 95% of N.E.W. parents are unemployed or work menial jobs, while N.E.W. students are the first in their family to go to college.
- N.E.W. has graduated educators, lawyers, accountants, social workers, and more.
- N.E.W. gives young women the tools and understanding to balance their identity as both Ethiopian and Israeli, and go on to be leaders in Israeli society.