



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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TO: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public School Districts

FROM: Angelique Johnson-Dingle, Deputy Commissioner P-12
Angelique Johnson-Dingle

SUBJECT: Holocaust Survey

DATE: October 2022

On August 10, 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law Chapter 490 of the Laws of 2022 requiring a survey regarding instruction on the Holocaust within New York State public school districts. Through the survey, superintendents are required to attest that the district is teaching about the Holocaust appropriately as part of classroom instruction aligned with the NYS Social Studies Learning Standards and §801 of Education Law. A report of the findings of the survey will be delivered to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the minority leader of the senate and the minority leader of the assembly.

The Holocaust Instruction Survey may be accessed through the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System in the [NYSED Business Portal](#). Survey questions and instructions for accessing the survey are attached to this Memo.

Survey responses must be submitted to the Department no later than 5:00 PM on November 10, 2022.

Per §3 of Chapter 490 of the Laws of 2022, each school district that does not respond to the survey or does not affirmatively attest that such instruction is provided, will be required to prepare and implement a corrective action plan (to be prescribed by the Department) to comply with the instruction required by law. The corrective action plan will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education, with a certain timeframe for approval, form, and format that is acceptable to the Commissioner.

Section §801 of Education Law states that “in order to promote a spirit of patriotic and civic service and obligation and to foster in the children of the state moral and intellectual qualities which are essential in preparing to meet the obligations of citizenship ... the Regents of The University of the State of New York shall prescribe courses of instruction in patriotism, citizenship, and human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery (including the freedom trail and underground railroad), the Holocaust, and the mass starvation in Ireland from 1845 to 1850, to be maintained and followed in all the schools of the state... All pupils

attending such schools, over the age of eight years, shall attend upon such instruction.” The New York State [K-12 Social Studies Framework](#) requires instruction in the Holocaust at specific grade levels. While instruction of human rights and the Holocaust is discussed and taught throughout K-12, it is more explicitly taught in the 8th, 10th, and 11th grades when students learn about the horrors of the Holocaust, the Nuremberg Trials, and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

To support schools with instruction around the Holocaust within their instructional programs, the [Office of Standards and Instruction](#) has developed a [Holocaust education resources page](#) that includes examples of New York State, national, and international resources that could be used in the classroom. Please reach out to the Office of Standards and Instruction (emscurric@nysed.gov or 518-474-5922) if you have additional resources to share or questions related to this survey or to instruction related to the Holocaust.

Holocaust Instruction Survey Questions

Question 1: I attest that, in compliance with Education Law §801, my school district provides instruction related to the Holocaust to students at the following levels: (select all that apply)

- X Elementary
- X Middle
- X High School
- None

Question 2: Please describe how your district provides instruction about the Holocaust through a curriculum aligned to the NYS Social Studies Learning Standards at the Elementary School level. *

Please answer thoroughly.

As part of the social studies curriculum at 4th grade, students research and complete a cross curricular project with ELA. The research is focused on the statement “Anne Frank has a lot of heart”. Through the exploration of this topic, students become familiar with not only who Anne Frank was, but the Holocaust and its effect on millions of Jewish people. By exploring the impact of the Holocaust from a child’s perspective, students are better able to connect to Anne Frank and the historical events during which she lived.

Students have also completed historical fiction units on social issues related to the Holocaust and read the books *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry as well as *Milkweed*, by Jerry Spinelli. The books provide an entrée into the Holocaust for young readers as well as a way to build critical thinking skills about history.

The Clay Marble – multiple perspectives

Is there a compare and contrast for kids in a time of crisis – the Lost boys from Sudan?
How do you cope with crisis?

Question 3: Please describe how your district provides instruction about the Holocaust through a curriculum aligned to the NYS Social Studies Learning Standards at the Middle School level. *

Please answer thoroughly.

Holocaust curriculum at the middle school is delivered through the Framework unit 8.6 WORLD WAR II.

An 8th grade social studies unit has been created specifically to address the Holocaust, its causes, and its effects with specific attention being paid to the human rights abuses that occurred. Using a CRE lens, the unit begins with the question “Do you have to go along with other people’s ideas even if you don’t agree with them?” This theme

carries through the unit and leads to an assessment of how the Holocaust came to be, and also focuses on those allies who tried to help (anti-Holocaust).

We also address the Holocaust in the social studies elective course “Liberating Societies”. The unit “Resistance” is designed to explore the terms: *perpetrator*, *victim*, *bystander*, and *upstander*. By framing the unit in these terms, we hope students gain an understanding of how the Holocaust happened and also the reasons it ended.

Question 4: Please describe how your district provides instruction about the Holocaust through a curriculum aligned to the NYS Social Studies Learning Standards at the High School level. *

Please answer thoroughly.

Social Studies have created social studies unit plans specifically addressing the Holocaust, its causes, and its effects. The units are aligned to the 9-12 Framework (and specifically 11.8) and developed through a trauma sensitive lens. These units provide teachers the tools and resources necessary to address the Holocaust from a political, social, economic, and humanistic perspective to ensure atrocities such as these never happen again.

The unit plans include an essential question, enduring understandings, misconceptions, and a culminating assessment (based on the essential question). All of these parts come together to focus on how nations can recognize, address and ultimately prevent these abuses from happening again.

Question 5: In what capacity does your school provide instruction related to the Holocaust? Select all that apply. *

- X Embedded within the Social Studies Curriculum
- X Embedded within the English Language Arts Curriculum
- X As a separate course
- Through special school event(s)
- Other (please specify)

Question 6: What type of training have the educators had to prepare them for teaching about the Holocaust? *

Please answer thoroughly.

Several of our social studies teachers have attended the Echoes & Reflections training. The Mission of the organization is to reshape “the way that teachers and students understand, process, and navigate the world through the events of the Holocaust. The Holocaust is more than a historical event; it’s part of the larger human story. Educating students about its significance is a great responsibility. We partner with educators to help them introduce students to the complex themes of the Holocaust and to understand its lasting effect on the world.”

The training provided lesson plans, supporting materials, and a newsletter


subscription which teachers used to develop, enhance, and strengthen Holocaust curriculum in our schools.

At minimum, the Holocaust is also covered as part of teacher prep programs and through our professional learning opportunities. We develop in-house curriculum that is culturally and linguistically responsive in order to provide students a full and true accounting of historical events. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to work together to create lesson plans that are consistent, rigorous, and aligned to the Framework.

Instructions for Submitting the Holocaust Instruction Survey

All public school district superintendents are required to attest that the district is teaching about the Holocaust appropriately as part of classroom instruction aligned with the NYS Social Studies Learning Standards and §801 of Education Law.

The survey is located in the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System, located in the NYSED Business Portal. To access the survey:

1. Go to the Business Portal (<http://portal.nysed.gov>).
2. Click on the Log In button. If needed, a user may also reset a previously assigned password.
3. Enter your username and password.
4. Click on "SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System" under My Applications.
5. Click ".
6. Select "Holocaust Instruction Survey."
7. Click on "View" to begin/continue to input information.
8. Superintendents may access any section or page of the application by clicking on one of the links in the *Survey Navigation* panel. Superintendents are not required to complete sections in the order they appear in the survey navigation menu.
9. Superintendents are required to answer all questions marked with a red asterisk. If a required question has not been completed, the business portal will highlight it in red and the section of the application will be flagged. The applicant will be unable to submit the plan section to NYSED for final review if a required question remains *unresolved*.
10. The survey must be submitted/certified Superintendent before submission.
11. Please contact the SEDDAS Help Desk at SEDDAS@nysed.gov to resolve any questions related to user accounts, password resets, the SEDDAS application, and

assistance with the Business Portal itself.