



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Holocaust Instruction

2022

Authorizing Legislation: [Senate Bill 5612 \(2019\)](#)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed [Senate Bill 5612 \(SB 5612\)](#), concerning Holocaust education. This established a policy framework through [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.300.115](#) to prepare and make available instructional materials about the Holocaust and other genocides and to strongly encourage every public middle school, junior high school, and high school to include them in its curriculum. The law requires that schools use these best practices and guidelines when engaging with Holocaust and genocide education.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) designated Seattle's [Holocaust Center for Humanity \(HCH\)](#) as the expert non-profit that would prepare instructional materials, best practices, and guidelines on the Holocaust and other genocides. Since September 2020, the [OSPI website](#) and [HCH website](#) have provided these comprehensive best practices and guidelines. They are updated according to relevant changes in the subject area and associated data on teaching and learning.

Implementation continued despite the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and other regional and national crises affecting the Washington education system. The use of guidelines, best practices, and other instructional materials provided by HCH in partnership with OSPI has grown, as have the availability of in-person and virtual instructional materials; the number of schools served; and the number of continuing education professional development opportunities offered to Washington educators. The impact of this program can be seen in the geographic distribution of districts reached, as well as in the qualitative responses to survey questions, which show a positive impact and desire for expanded access to Holocaust and genocide education resources.

As a result of feedback from educators and in partnership with the HCH, OSPI has summarized feedback and provided the following recommendations for legislative consideration:

- Establish a requirement for all schools to recognize International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month in April, providing space for formal recognition of the Holocaust and genocide education during the month of April.
- Require that all students receive annual instruction that is grade level and age-appropriate during International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month in April, at least once in each grade, K–12. Strongly encourage all districts to offer at least one Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone course elective that is available to students at least once in grades 6–12, and that districts are provided specific guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and educator professional development required to be implemented with this instruction.
- Maintain the legislative commitment to Holocaust and genocide education by providing increased and ongoing resources to support the continued development of instructional materials and educator professional development needed to address data in support of statewide Holocaust and genocide education. Require Holocaust and genocide education content in courses where Holocaust and genocide education content aligns with Social Studies standards, including US History and Contemporary World History.

# INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed [Senate Bill 5612 \(SB 5612\)](#), which strongly encourages every public middle school, junior high school, and high school to provide opportunities for students to learn about the Holocaust and other genocides. Additionally, SB 5612 requires OSPI to partner with an expert non-profit to provide the following deliverables:

- Develop [best practices](#) and [guidelines](#) for high-quality instruction
- Encourage and support middle, junior high, and high school teachers in implementing them
- Train teachers who teach in subjects relevant to the topic subject to appropriations

The legislation also requires that beginning September 1, 2020, public middle, junior high, and high schools teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide use the best practices and guidelines developed.

Senate Bill 5612 states that the studying of this material is intended to:

- Examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance
- Prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy
- Be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.

This report, provided with support from the Holocaust Center for Humanity (HCH)—the designated expert non-profit—will address the following requirements of SB5612:

- Implementation:
  - How the best practices and guidelines for high-quality instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust developed under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [28A.300.115](#) are being implemented statewide
  - The number of teachers trained and supported in using the best practices and guidelines in the past two years
- Recommendations:
  - Whether the Legislature should require instruction in public schools, and if so, in which grades
  - Whether OSPI should modify the best practices and guidelines and, if so, how

# BEST PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION

RCW 28A.300.115 requires that the Holocaust Center for Humanity (HCH), as OSPI's contracted partner, develop best practices and guidelines for high-quality instruction, and encourage and support middle, junior high, and high school teachers in implementing them. Additionally, HCH must train educators who teach subjects relevant to this content area (see Appendix for a breakdown of participant subject areas and education roles).

HCH developed a comprehensive set of best practices that educators must use when teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides. These best practices include:

1. Consider the [guidelines](#) for teaching about the Holocaust
2. Establish a rationale and outcomes for teaching about the Holocaust
3. Create a safe and respectful learning environment
4. Establish the historical context
5. Provide culminating activities that allow students to reflect on and connect their learning

Often, in middle school, Holocaust and genocide education is provided by English language arts educators where it falls outside the scope and sequence of Washington's K–12 Social Studies Learning Standards. In high school, Holocaust and genocide education is usually provided in social studies classes where it aligns more closely with the Social Studies Learning Standards. This point is reflected in HCH's data, collected between 2019 and 2022, on who is served by their Holocaust and genocide education materials (see Appendix).

## IMPLEMENTATION

*If you ask me what I want to achieve, it's to create an awareness,  
which is already the beginning of teaching."  
- Elie Wiesel*

Implementation has been carried out by HCH staff alongside its individual and institutional partners, in collaboration with OSPI. Following the creation of the best practices and guidelines in 2020, HCH has continuously reached out to the nearly 300 school districts across Washington. The purpose of such ongoing outreach has been to offer free professional development, support, and updates about events, programs, resources, and lessons. In the past two school years, despite COVID-19 restrictions, HCH has provided 85 professional development sessions for Washington educators.

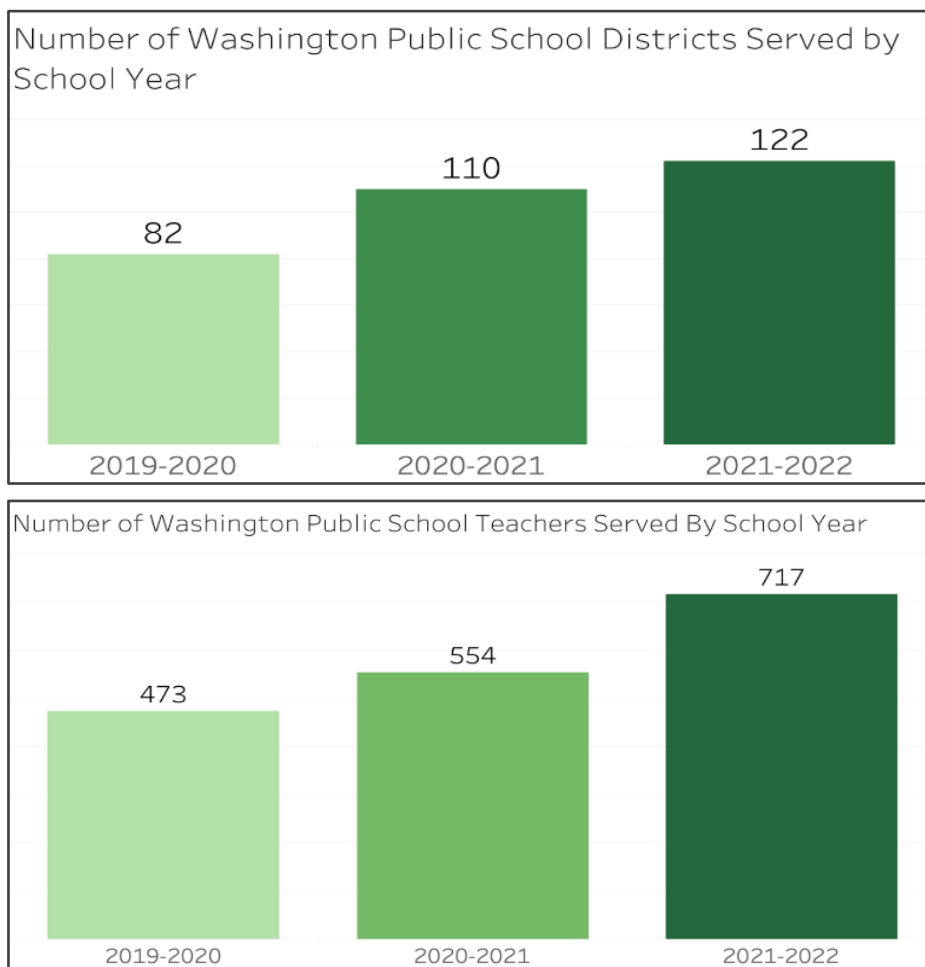
Collaborative efforts to expand access to these materials resulted in a marked increase in the number of districts, schools, and educators reached. Contact increased from 82 school districts in

the 2019–20 school year to 122 school districts during the 2021–22 school year, and communication with educators increased from 473 individuals to 717 within the same timeframe.

Additionally, since 2020, HCH has expanded its content to include focused lessons connecting to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI) standards, along with less-told stories from the Holocaust and other genocides, lessons on racism in the United States, and many other associated areas. This content also includes strategies for learners to become upstanders in the face of bias, prejudice, injustice, and other factors that contribute to a society where genocide could occur.

Figure 1 below shows all public-school districts in Washington who utilized HCH education programming, and districts reached in district-specific professional development sessions across each of the three school years. Participating districts were only counted once per year.

**Figure 1: Growth of Holocaust Education in Washington State, 2019–2022**



**Source:** The Holocaust Center for Humanity (HCH), 2022

# IMPACT

As a routine component of Holocaust and genocide instruction, HCH and OSPI collected quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data shows the spread of resources, while qualitative data provides insight into participants' intellectual and ideological transformations. OSPI collected qualitative data through a required component of the continuing education credits (clock hours) process while HCH surveyed students, educators, and other participants from Washington's education community.

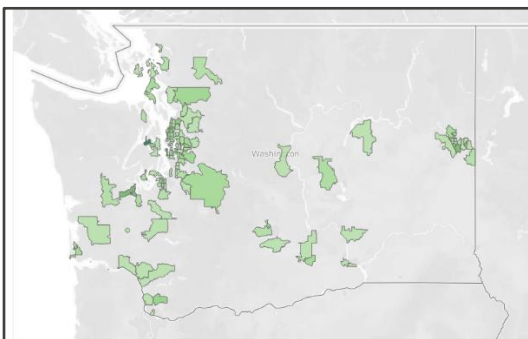
Below, data visualizations and survey responses provide a snapshot of the program's growth into geographically and socially diverse areas of Washington and its impact on those who engaged with the materials.

## Increased Access to Holocaust and Genocide Education

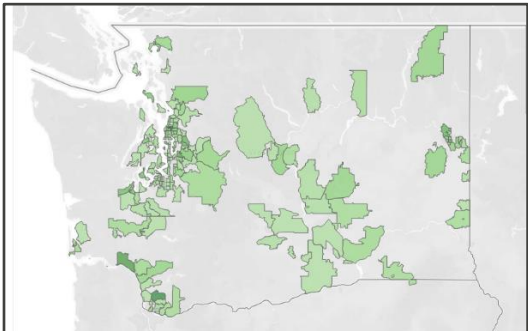
One of the results of the partnership between the HCH and OSPI is a marked increase in the teaching of Holocaust and genocide education in secondary classrooms (grades 6–12) across Washington.

The heat maps below (Figure 2) depict the growth in Holocaust and genocide education across Washington since the inception of SB 5612 in 2019. The maps illustrate participation in HCH programming by zip code. They account for the frequency of programming received in that zip code per year. Each data point represents one instance of program participation. Programs include Speakers Bureau, Field Trips, Teaching Trunks, Professional Development/Teacher Training, Educators for Change, Writing, Art, and Film Contest, and Book-by-Book, but exclude Lunch and Learns.

**Figure 2.1: Heat Map of Holocaust and Genocide Education, 2019–20**



**Figure 2.2: Heat Map of Holocaust and Genocide Education, 2020–21**



**Figure 2.3: Heat Map of Holocaust and Genocide Education, 2021–22**



**Source:** Maps provided by the Holocaust Center for Humanity, 2022

Senate Bill 5612 tasked OSPI and the HCH to administer a Holocaust and genocide education program to “examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance.” The following components of a quality Holocaust and genocide education program are necessary:

1. Connecting to other historical and contemporary events and issues
2. Facilitating understanding and challenging hatred in all its forms
3. Connecting to student Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) needs and interests

To measure success, the Holocaust Center for Humanity independently collected survey data when providing Holocaust instruction for districts and educators. Ninety-five percent of the 148 teachers surveyed by HCH agreed that programming helped them “better understand how teaching the lessons of the Holocaust is relevant to students.” Survey responses from students and educators, shown below, are consistent with this information.

Educators and students report significant positive impact when they have access to quality Holocaust and genocide education.

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*“The idea that sticks in my mind the most is the idea of how people can be so easily manipulated into utter hate for each other (and, relatedly, how they would turn a blind eye to the persecution of others).”*

*-12th grade student, Inglemoor High School, Northshore, WA*

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*“I think there’s a lot to learn from it even now and it’s an event that sparks a sort of moral passion into you to want to resist what happened during the event.”*

*-10th grade student, Battle Ground High School, Battle Ground, WA*

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*"What blows me away is the ease with which the tools will be utilized and the numerous intersections that can be made with so much of the other work I do related to SEL and building empathy."*

*-Teacher from Brier Terrace Middle School, Brier, WA*

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In addition to the qualitative responses collected by HCH, OSPI collected survey responses as a part of the continuing education credit (clock hours) for certification of Washington state educators.

Between April 15, 2021, and September 8, 2022, OSPI hosted 12 events (listed in the Appendix) via PD Enroller; 532 unique registrants responded to prompts through the clock hours surveys required to attain continuing education credit.

Approximately 134 unique organizations are represented in the raw data, including school districts, schools, regional educational service districts (ESDs), OSPI, and other educational bodies. The participating staff, classified and non-classified roles, received 1,091 clock hours associated with the events. Below represents a sample of the qualitative data retrieved from those clock hours surveys.

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*...I'd love to see more sessions for educators about antisemitism. This is literally the ONLY training/workshop I'd ever seen for educators, and I've been teaching 10+ years and I go to A LOT of trainings, specifically ones about fighting injustice and anti-racism. Jewish people should have a place in those conversations.*

*-Clock Hour Participant*

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*All the presenters had such pertinent information to share, but I felt very fortunate and impacted to have "met" Carla today. Her story brought so much emotion and a sense of importance to how vital it is for us to continue her story and the history of the Holocaust in our teaching, so that we can keep this from happening again in our students' futures. Learning from our history is one of the most important parts of education.*

*-Clock Hour Participant*

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*Being challenged to look at WWII, Holocaust, and common Jewish narratives*

*through a different lens. This talk truly made me reflect on the lack stories about the breadth of Jewish experience and strength. That, in turn, made me reflect on how we tend to do that [to] marginalized groups.*

*-Clock Hour Participant*

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Best practices by the Holocaust Center for Humanity (HCH) state that studying the Holocaust provides students the opportunity to learn the importance of speaking out against bigotry and indifference, promoting equity, and taking action. OSPI and HCH believe that learning about the Holocaust should be elevated in the same manner as Martin Luther King Jr.; United States veterans; and other people, groups, and events whose importance to developing empathetic, civic minded students is recognized through statute.

In their joint efforts to better implement Holocaust and genocide education, OSPI and HCH found that educators were eager to participate in professional development for Holocaust and genocide education. In alignment with research and illustrated in the qualitative feedback above, educators and students reported significant positive impacts when accessing quality Holocaust and genocide education. OSPI and the HCH also recognize the impact of requiring new content requirements absent appropriate funding for educator professional development and implementation.

For this reason, to continue the success of this work, OSPI supports the following recommendations.

### Phase 1, Starting in the 2023–24 School Year

1. OSPI and HCH recommend the Legislature establish a requirement for all schools to recognize International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month in April, providing space for formal recognition of the Holocaust and genocide education during the month of April.
2. OSPI and HCH recommend the Legislature establish a requirement for students to receive annual instruction that is grade level and age-appropriate during International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month in April, at least once in each grade, K–12. Schools must provide instruction to all students, through classroom instruction, guest speakers, assemblies, or other developmentally appropriate delivery.
3. OSPI and HCH recommend the Legislature strongly encourage all districts offer at least one Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective that is available to students at least once in grades 6–12, and that districts are provided specific guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and professional learning to support implementation of this instruction.
4. RCW 28A.300.115 requires OSPI to publish best practices and guidelines electronically and to update them on an annual basis. OSPI and HCH believe there is a need to continue

updating Holocaust education best practices and guidelines, and as such recommend the Legislature maintain this commitment by providing increased and ongoing resources to support the continued development of instructional resources and professional development for educators to reflect emerging data in teaching and learning to support statewide Holocaust and genocide education. OSPI has submitted an agency budget request for the 2023 Legislative Session, outlined below in the Next Steps section, further describing the need.

## Phase 2, Starting in the 2027–28 School Year

1. After implementation of Phase 1, system capacity will be built through legislative funding, and we anticipate an increase in instruction about the Holocaust and other genocides during Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month. After districts establish elective course work, instructional materials are provided, and educators have access to additional professional development, we recommend the Legislature require Holocaust and genocide education content be taught in courses where Holocaust and genocide education content aligns with Social Studies Learning Standards, including US History and Contemporary World History.

## Next Steps

OSPI has submitted a budget request to the Governor’s Office and the Legislature<sup>1</sup> for consideration in the 2023 Legislative Session to continue its partnership with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust to increase awareness of and implementation of Holocaust and genocide education.

In addition to the recommendations identified above, OSPI is seeking continued resources to support the following:

1. Reaching 50% of Washington middle and high school classrooms with new and updated educational resources.
2. Maintaining professional development opportunities for educators teaching about the Holocaust and genocide, including but not limited to those teaching in middle and high school classrooms.
3. Creating a summer leadership program for students.
4. Continuing program evaluation and reporting abilities.
5. Covering the administrative costs of the programs, including in-person eastside district support located in Spokane.
6. Convening a statewide consortium of experts and educators that will periodically review the state of Holocaust and genocide education in Washington.

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<sup>1</sup> [Bolstering Holocaust and Genocide Education for Washington Students Statewide](#)

7. Marketing of programming during Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month.

## CONCLUSION

To ensure the work of Holocaust and genocide education remains responsive to Washington's education community, HCH and OSPI continuously gathered feedback on the usefulness of resources and areas for future support. This feedback suggests that HCH's services and deliverables under this legislation have been widely received as effective learning tools for educators and students.

Further, Holocaust and genocide education, when implemented in alignment with HCH's best practices and guidelines, succeeds in its intention to examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.<sup>2</sup> Providing additional opportunities through the adoption of recommendations outlined in this report will result in better developing empathetic, civic minded students.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OSPI would like to thank the sponsors of [SB 5612](#) including: Senators Rivers, Salomon, Frockt, Wilson, C., Carlyle, Billig, Wellman, Zeiger, Warnick, Palumbo, Pedersen, Van De Wege, Hasegawa, Holy, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, and O'Ban, and the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. Additional thanks to Dee Simon, Paul Regelbrugge, Ilana Cone Kennedy, and other staff of the Holocaust Center for Humanity for providing data on the success of Holocaust and genocide education implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> RCW [28A.300.115](#) Holocaust instruction—Preparation and availability of instructional materials

# APPENDIX: PARTICIPANTS AND DATES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Table 1: Participants in Holocaust Education Professional Development by Subject**

Subject	Total Teachers Served*
English/Language Arts	42.4%
History/Social Studies	40.1%
Other	17.4%

\*In this sample size (n=384), participants at Holocaust education professional development sessions were asked to indicate the subject they teach.

**Table 2: Participants in Holocaust Education Professional Development by Education Role**

Education Role	Number of Participants*
Teacher	363
Paraeducator	23
Administrator	12
District Director	3
School Counselor	6
Substitute Teacher	4
Retired Teacher	7
Other	26

\*In this sample size (n=420), participants at Holocaust education professional development sessions were asked to select all that apply.

**Table 3: Dates of Holocaust Education Professional Development**

Date of PD	PD Enroller Catalog ID Number	Title of Event
06/29/2021	<a href="#">114852</a>	Day of Learning: Essential Lessons for Teaching the Holocaust
09/30/2021	<a href="#">133879</a>	Teaching with Artifacts: Learning about the Holocaust through Inquiry
01/20/2022	<a href="#">138016</a>	Teacher Workshop: Cultivating Questions & Curiosity through Holocaust History
03/03/2022	<a href="#">139833</a>	Recognizing and Confronting Antisemitism in Today's World
04/05/2022	<a href="#">139924</a>	Teaching the 10 Stages of Genocide
04/15/2022	<a href="#">111350</a>	Educating for Change: Ensuring Holocaust Remembrance in WA-State
04/28/2022	<a href="#">138850</a>	Then and There, Here and Now: Holocaust Education and Memory in WA-State
05/19/2022	<a href="#">142069</a>	People Love Dead Jews: A Conversation with Author Dara Horn
06/21/2022	<a href="#">139926</a>	Day of Learning: Rescue and Resistance during the Holocaust

Date of PD	PD Enroller Catalog ID Number	Title of Event
09/07/2022	<a href="#">140168</a>	(America and the Holocaust) History Unfolded: What Americans Knew about the Holocaust via Newspapers
09/08/2022	<a href="#">140172</a>	(America and the Holocaust) American Responses to the Holocaust
11/04/2022	<a href="#">135766</a>	Refugee: Integrating Authentic Literature in the Classroom with Alan Gratz

**Source:** PD Enroller, 10/04/2022

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