



HOLOCAUST  
INSTRUCTION IN NYS  
PUBLIC SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS



New York State Education Department



# HOLOCAUST INSTRUCTION IN NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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**VII.**

The requirement that New York State public school districts instruct their students about the Holocaust is found in Education Law S 801. The New York State Social Studies Learning Standards provide for the implementation of this requirement by requiring instruction in the Holocaust and other human rights atrocities. Instructiones

On August 10, 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law Chapter 490 of the Laws of 2022 requiring a survey regarding instruction about 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.

§801 of NYS Education Law that requires school districts teach about the Holocaust. It 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. The boards of education and trustees of the several cities and school districts of the state shall require instruction to be given in such courses, by the teachers employed in the schools therein. All pupils attending such schools, over the age of eight years, shall attend upon such instruction.



Figure 1 - New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies

History of the United States and New York

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

The K-12 Social Studies Framework guides local curriculum development in social studies. It fuses the New York State Learning Standards with social studies practices, key ideas, conceptual understandings, and content specifications. Teachers use the K-12 Social Studies Framework to incorporate content into their lesson plans to ensure students meet the standards. It helps teachers across the state identify the course content for each grade level and make connections to the broader standards. The content in the K-12 Social Studies Framework is also the basis for two social studies Regents examinations typically administered at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. All students in New York State are expected to study the Holocaust at multiple points in social studies. The Holocaust is explicitly referenced in the K-12 Social Studies Framework for courses in 8th, 10th, and 11th grades (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 1: Explicit references to the Holocaust in the K-12 Social Studies Framework

- The nature and consequences of warfare during World War II transformed the United States and the global community.
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In addition to the historical analysis integral to social studies education, the Holocaust is a topic that is often found in curricula across subject areas. Due to the timeless literature and rich historical

The Holocaust Instructional Education survey was developed by NYSED to identify which school districts are complying with Section 801 of Education Law.



99% of districts with secondary schools indicate they teach the Holocaust as “embedded in their social studies curriculum” and 88.5% indicate they teach the Holocaust as “embedded in their ELA curriculum” even though it is not required by the standards (Table 2). Many districts also place special emphasis on the Holocaust by

Embedded within the  
Social Studies  
Curriculum

SOUTH ORANGETOWN CSD

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- In the spring of 2021, Social Studies teachers and school leaders visited the Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education at Rockland Community College. Formerly located in Spring Valley, the museum was relocated to RCC and took five years to create. Our District team spent the morning touring and learning about the museum, discussing curriculum connections and planning for the museum's staff to visit with our elementary students and for our middle and high school students to take field trips to the museum.

Embedded within the  
English Language Arts  
Curriculum

GENESSEE VALLEY CSD

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- 6th Grade ELA Holocaust Study: In 6th grade, we complete a book study of the nonfiction novel *Four Perfect Pebbles: A True Story of the Holocaust* by Lila Perl and Marion Blumenthal Lazan. In this unit, students have their own copy of the book and we cover several skills as they independently read the novel. We conduct mini lessons as a whole group, meet with smaller groups, and work individually with students as needed. Students will read and write in response to texts.

Through special school  
event(s)

SOUTHERN CAYUGA CSD

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- One of 11 sites nationwide to receive an Anne Frank Tree sapling from the Anne Frank Center USA, the Southern Cayuga Anne Frank Tree Project sponsors a birthday party each June for elementary students commemorating Anne Frank's birthday of 6/12/29. The celebration includes guests readers or teachers reading from grade level appropriate books about Anne Frank so students understand the significance of Anne as a victim and diarist of the Holocaust.

Other (please specify)

MILLBROOK CSD

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- The music department chooses pieces from different cultures and explore the music and the culture and region from which the music came.

Embedded within the  
Social Studies  
Curriculum

TOWN OF WEBB UFSD

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- We use a similar approach as we do with Middle School, mixing in with these two methods lengthy class discussions on the nature and impact of the Holocaust. We provide instruction through the use of PowerPoint notes as well as videos that included interviews with survivors and their experiences. We also take a virtual tour through many of the prisons as well as the extermination camps. Students use some of the sources to construct a Critical Issues essay on human rights violations throughout history. Some reading excerpts that are included are from
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Embedded within the  
Social Studies Curriculum

SALAMANCA CITY SD

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- 9th and 10th grade participate in an Atrocity Museum Human Rights Atrocities throughout time into modern genocides highlights Holocaust within those atrocities

Embedded within the  
English Language Arts  
Curriculum

SCIO CSD

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- In 10th grade English class students read Weisel's memoir Night in addition to multiple supplemental texts to enhance and expand their understanding of Weisel's experiences. Students read stories,
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The final survey question asked districts to report how their teachers have been trained for teaching about the Holocaust. Responses were variable but included some commonalities. Many districts referenced specific professional development for teachers provided by



**District Superintendent Attestation** - I attest that instruction related to the Holocaust is provided at all appropriate grade levels in compliance with section eight hundred one of the education law.

## **Holocaust Instruction Survey Questions**

### **Question 1**