



LOUISE D. AND MORTON J. MACKS
CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION
Live and Learn • תחיית ולימוד

Holocaust Education in Baltimore's Jewish Day Schools, Yeshivas, and Congregational Schools

Last spring the CJE received several requests from educators searching for resources related to Holocaust education. In response, an informal survey was sent to Jewish Day schools and Supplementary schools to get a sense of what is being taught, to which grades, and which resources are already used in our Jewish Schools. We heard back from many of the schools, although not all of them. These survey results below reflect a general pulse of the community, and is by no means a scientific study.

In previous years most students who were studying the Holocaust were able to listen in person to hear firsthand testimony of a survivor. Looking ahead, the next generation will not be able to have that experience. As the lifetime of survivors eclipse, it is also concerning to note that most Americans under age 40 know very little about the Holocaust and 1/10 of them have never even heard the word Holocaust.¹ **This makes the process of creating, evaluating, and implementing a strong Holocaust curriculum in Baltimore Jewish Day Schools and supplemental schools' utmost priority.** Moreover, it is important that all schools, not just Jewish schools, teach about the Holocaust. In a recent study, the ADL found that those who received Holocaust education were more empathetic, tolerant, and engaged students than their counterparts.²

Survey Results

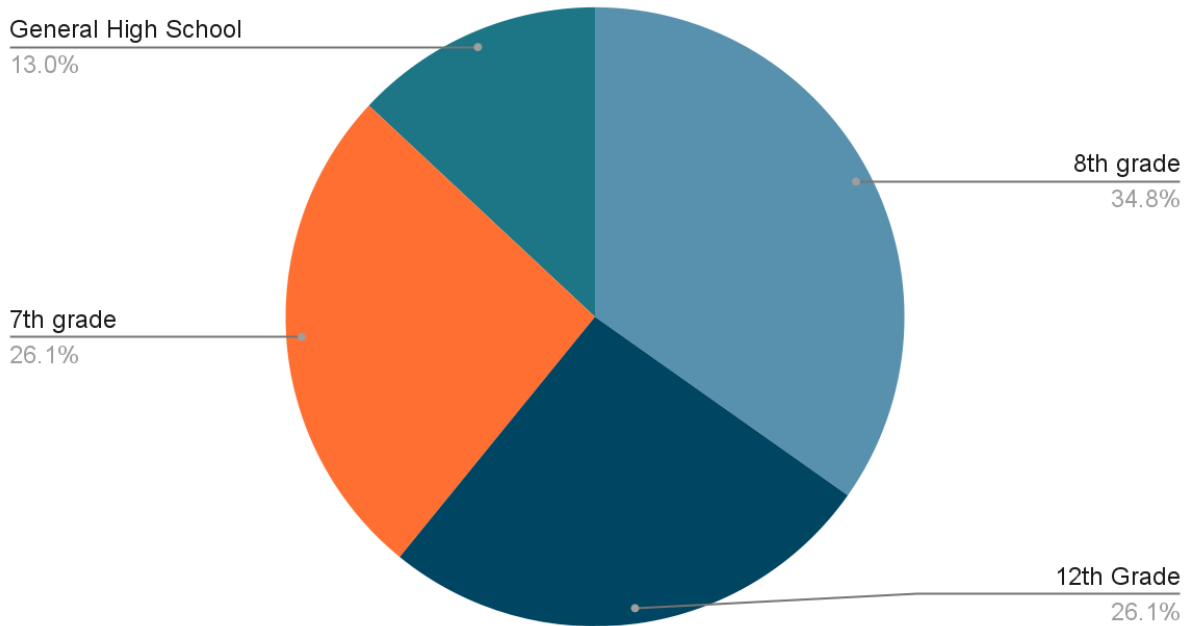
In a recent survey of Baltimore's Jewish Day Schools, Yeshivas, and Congregational Schools, the Center for Jewish Education (CJE) has found a diversity of approaches related to Holocaust Education.

CJE's Holocaust Survey found that the majority of Jewish schools in Baltimore teach about the Holocaust in the Eighth grade (8 schools) followed by Twelfth grade (6 schools), followed by Seventh grade (6 schools). None of the schools surveyed teach Holocaust to any students younger than Sixth grade.

¹ [Survey finds 'shocking' lack of Holocaust knowledge among millennials and Gen Z \(nbcnews.com\)](https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/holocaust/survey-finds-shocking-lack-holocaust-knowledge-among-millennials-gen-z-nbcnews.com)

² [Survey of U.S. College Students Shows Holocaust Education is Effective in Building Empathy, Tolerance and Open Mindedness | Anti-Defamation League \(adl.org\)](https://www.adl.org/press-releases/survey-of-u-s-college-students-shows-holocaust-education-is-effective-in-building-empathy-tolerance-and-open-mindedness)

In Which Grades do Students Learn about the Holocaust?



There are multiple **subject areas** where the Holocaust is taught. The majority of schools teach their Holocaust curriculum as a part of their history class (ten schools), nine schools teach this unit as a part of their Judaic curriculum, and six schools teach it as a part of their literature curriculum. Some schools teach the Holocaust when it comes up naturally in the calendar, for example, four schools teach it in relation to Yom HaShoah in the spring or on fast days. Others teach it as related to their WWII unit or periodically throughout the year.

The **curriculum** that schools already use is:

Facing History, Echoes and Reflections, USHMM materials
USHMM website, Eye Witness to History, Project Witness,
Interviews with survivors, YouTube videos.

The **books** that students read include:

The Holocaust by Seymour Rossel
Fridrich by Hans Peter Richter
Hidden in Thunder by Esther Farbstein
Sand and Stars by Yaffa Ganz
Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne
Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen
Maus by Art Spiegelman
The Diary of Anne Frank
Night by Elie Weisel
To Vanquish the Dragon by Pearl Benisch

Overall teachers expressed that they would be interested in more professional development and assistance with additional resources.

75% of teachers surveyed would like some sort of professional development surrounding Holocaust education.

58% would like additional resources

As a community agency with a wide lens perspective of the educational needs in the local schools, the CJE is in the unique position to initiate the following offerings, in response to the overwhelming desire from the schools seeking support on Holocaust education:

- 1) Convene a PLC (Professional Learning Community) of teachers who cover the topic Holocaust education. This cohort of teachers will meet three times during the 2021-22 school year in January, March, and May to share their best practices and/or seek additional support for their Holocaust curriculum.
- 2) Direct teachers to opportunities for additional learning such as events, webinars and conferences. For instance: **Evidence Against Intolerance: A Virtual Symposium on Teaching the Holocaust in the Digital Disinformation Era 2/23 9 - 5 PM**
[Symposium Agenda – Evidence Against Intolerance: A Virtual Symposium on Holocaust Education \(towson.edu\)](#)
- 3) Provide a list of curated resources on our website to help educators find what they need. In addition, CJE has an extensive Holocaust related selection of library of books and curricular resources that are available at no charge. Please click here to apply for you or your school:
https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/y6ux8BPGUI_kih5rBPpYMg