



K–12 Education: How States and the U.S. Holocaust Museum Support Holocaust Education

GAO-26-108023

Q&A Report to Congressional Committees

July 7, 2026

Why This Matters

In 2020, Congress passed the Never Again Education Act to support Holocaust education. The law authorized federal support for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (U.S. Holocaust Museum) to develop and disseminate educational materials and provide teachers with professional learning opportunities. In passing the act, Congress found that Holocaust education preserves historical understanding and provides a context for examining unchecked antisemitism. In 2024, K–12 schools reported at least 850 antisemitic incidents, over half of which involved a Nazi propaganda symbol, according to the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and assault.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum, a nonpartisan federal institution, works to educate people about the Holocaust and what made it possible, including antisemitism and choices people made during the Holocaust. It is the main provider of federal resources on the topic, including both in-person and online educational materials to visitors, students, and educators.

K–12 Holocaust education varies across states, and states choose to teach the topic in various subject areas, including social studies, history, and English language arts. Federal law prohibits officers or employees of the federal government from mandating, directing, or controlling state, district, or school instructional content or materials, academic standards, curricula, programs of instruction, or academic assessments. State governments and school districts develop and implement their own legislation, academic standards, and curricula that may or may not explicitly mention the Holocaust.

Senate Report 118-84 includes a provision for us to examine K–12 Holocaust education in K–12 public schools. This report provides information on what federal resources the U.S. Holocaust Museum provides to support Holocaust education, state K–12 Holocaust education practices, and challenges in supporting K–12 Holocaust education. For this report, we surveyed state educational agency officials, reviewed publicly available state documents, and sent a structured online questionnaire to a nongeneralizable sample of teachers. We also interviewed officials from various state and private entities and the U.S. Holocaust Museum. See “How GAO Did This Study” for additional details on our methodology.

Key Takeaways

- The U.S. Holocaust Museum supports Holocaust education by providing professional development and educational materials, partnering with state and local organizations, and researching effective education strategies.

- Most states (43 of 51, including the District of Columbia) have established state academic standards that distinctly mention the Holocaust or laws explicitly requiring Holocaust education for K–12 schools.
- State officials and teachers cited several challenges in supporting Holocaust education in K–12 schools. According to our state survey and teacher questionnaire, challenges included inadequate teacher professional development and insufficient instructional time.

How does the U.S. Holocaust Museum support Holocaust education?

The U.S. Holocaust Museum supports Holocaust education by welcoming approximately 400,000 students annually to the Museum. It also provides professional development and educational materials for teachers, partners with state and local organizations, and researches effective education strategies.¹ In fiscal year 2025, the Museum received \$2 million in federal funds through the Never Again Education Act to use for purposes such as promoting Holocaust education.²

The U.S. Holocaust Museum provides professional development and educational materials to support teachers who teach about the Holocaust, according to our interviews with Museum officials and our review of Museum documents.

- **Professional development.** The Museum provides professional development for teachers through its annual conference, fellowships, online videos, and webinars. Museum officials said 94 percent of the 351 conference participants who completed their feedback survey indicated that they felt more prepared to teach about the Holocaust after their 2025 conference. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents said they would incorporate a Museum resource into their future teaching. In addition, the Museum Teacher Fellowship program selects and trains teachers to provide local professional development and expand the number of teachers teaching about the Holocaust using Museum resources.
- **Educational materials.** The Museum offers over 100 classroom-ready digital resources—including lesson plans, online lessons, videos, and materials available in both English and Spanish—based on the Museum’s collection of artifacts. The Museum’s educational materials incorporate primary sources to support understanding of how and why the Holocaust happened. For example, the Museum created teacher guides that highlight Museum resources, such as diaries, memoirs, or other works of literature. The Museum also makes physical educational materials available to students in underresourced areas.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum partners with state and local leaders and leads a network of Holocaust education centers and teachers to share resources and expand education nationwide.

- **Partnerships with state and local leaders.** The Museum partners with state and local curriculum leaders through its Holocaust Education State Leaders Cohort and its Education Leaders webpage. First established in 2024, the Holocaust Education State Leaders Cohort connects state curriculum supervisors from social studies and English Language Arts to share and plan Holocaust educational resources to meet local and state requirements. The Education Leaders webpage includes materials to support alignment with state standards, professional development opportunities available at local Holocaust museums and the Museum, and other educational materials.
- **Networks of Holocaust education centers and teachers.** The Museum’s Community of Holocaust Education Centers—a network of

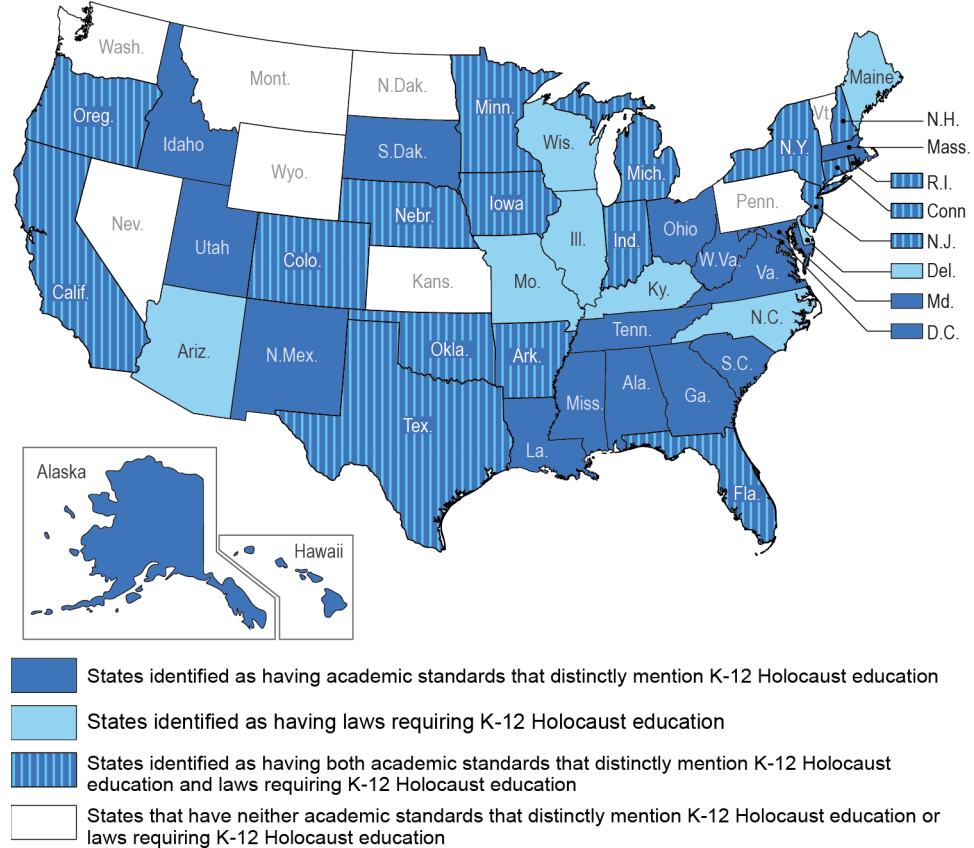
local Holocaust organizations—promotes collaboration among local and regional Holocaust organizations to advance Holocaust education. For example, New York’s curriculum guide was written in cooperation with a network member to encourage teachers to use Museum resources. Additionally, over 68,000 teachers are members of the Museum’s educator network that provides ongoing professional development and resources.

In addition, the U.S. Holocaust Museum regularly conducts research and evaluations to ensure its resources are focused on the most effective strategies for supporting Holocaust education.

How do states use academic standards, laws, or other methods to support K–12 Holocaust education?

As of February 2026, states had a variety of approaches to K–12 Holocaust education. Most states (43 of 51) had established academic standards that explicitly include the Holocaust or passed legislation requiring schools to teach about the Holocaust. The remaining eight states had neither academic standards nor laws explicitly requiring Holocaust education, but may have supported Holocaust education in other ways, according to our review of publicly available state academic standards and our independent legal review of state laws requiring Holocaust education (see fig. 1).

Figure 1: States Identified as Having Academic Standards and/or Laws Requiring K–12 Holocaust Education



Source: GAO review of publicly available state academic standards that explicitly include the Holocaust and independent legal review of state laws requiring Holocaust education. | GAO-26-108023

Note: GAO identified states with academic standards requiring K–12 Holocaust education by reviewing publicly available documentation from each state. GAO included states in this category if the academic standards explicitly used the word “Holocaust.” It was not within the scope of GAO’s review to conduct an independent legal review of state academic standards. GAO conducted an independent legal review to identify state laws that require Holocaust education in K–12 public schools. GAO included states in this category if the state law explicitly requires Holocaust education. Although Massachusetts has a state law that requires school districts to teach the history of genocide, GAO did not include Massachusetts in this category because the law does not explicitly require instruction on the Holocaust.

State academic standards. According to our review of state academic standards, about two-thirds of states (35 of 51) explicitly included teaching the Holocaust in their standards.³ Those standards varied in level of specificity. For example, Florida’s social studies standards called for teaching the foundations of Holocaust education in fifth grade by defining the Holocaust and antisemitism. They continued through 12th grade, by which time students will have analyzed the origins of antisemitism and its use by the Nazi regime; explained the significant events, public policies, and experiences of the Holocaust; and discussed its impact and aftermath. Meanwhile, New Hampshire’s social studies standards explicitly mentioned the Holocaust in one world history standard in which students explore the use and abuse of power that results in mass murder and genocide, including but not limited to the Holocaust.

State officials from three states said new standards related to Holocaust education were planned to issue in the next 3 years, according to our state survey.⁴ For example, Iowa issued new Holocaust education standards on January 15, 2026. According to state officials, Iowa’s previous social studies standards were broadly written to allow teaching the Holocaust without explicitly requiring it. In contrast, Iowa’s new social studies standards specifically address the causes and impact of the Holocaust.

State laws. Almost half of states (25 of 51) required Holocaust education through state laws, according to our independent legal review. For example:

- Michigan’s law requires school boards to ensure that social studies curriculum includes age-appropriate and grade-appropriate instruction about genocide, including but not limited to the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide for grades 8 through 12.
- Texas’s law establishes Holocaust Remembrance Week in public schools, which is required to include age-appropriate instruction about the history and lessons learned from the Holocaust.
- Arizona’s law requires the state board of education to include a requirement that students be taught about the Holocaust and other genocides for at least three class periods, or the equivalent, on at least two occasions between seventh and 12th grade.

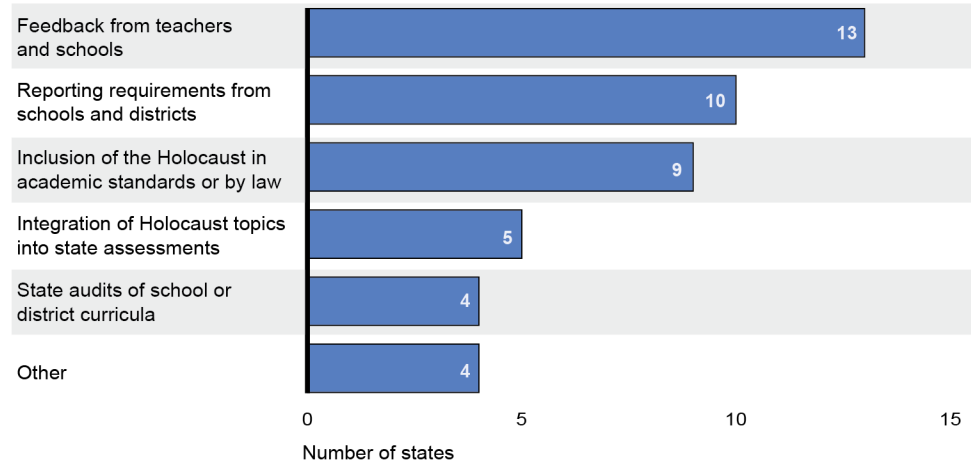
One-quarter of state officials who completed our survey (12 of 48) responded that their state legislatures had proposed new laws or changes to existing laws related to Holocaust education for K–12 public schools.⁵ For example, one state official reported that their state legislature frequently proposed new laws to teach the Holocaust. Similarly, a state official we interviewed told us their state was considering a bill to require age-appropriate education on the Holocaust for K–12 students starting in sixth grade.

Other methods. According to our review of academic standards and our independent legal review of state laws, eight of 51 states do not require Holocaust education through standards or laws. However, these states may support Holocaust education in other ways, such as through explicit guidance. Officials we interviewed in one state said their education laws prevented the state from making decisions on what is taught in the classroom, including teaching about the Holocaust. Rather, schools and school districts in that state can make their own decisions on what content they teach. However, these officials said they support Holocaust education in other ways. For example, they participate in the U.S. Holocaust Museum’s Holocaust Education State Leaders Cohort and its Teacher Fellowship program.

How do states describe ensuring that K–12 students receive Holocaust education when required?

Almost two-thirds of state officials (30 of 48) who responded to our survey reported that their states have methods to ensure K–12 students receive Holocaust education when required. The most common monitoring method states reported was through feedback from teachers and schools (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: Methods States Reported Using to Ensure K–12 Students Receive Holocaust Education When Required



Source: GAO survey of state educational agency officials. | GAO-26-108023

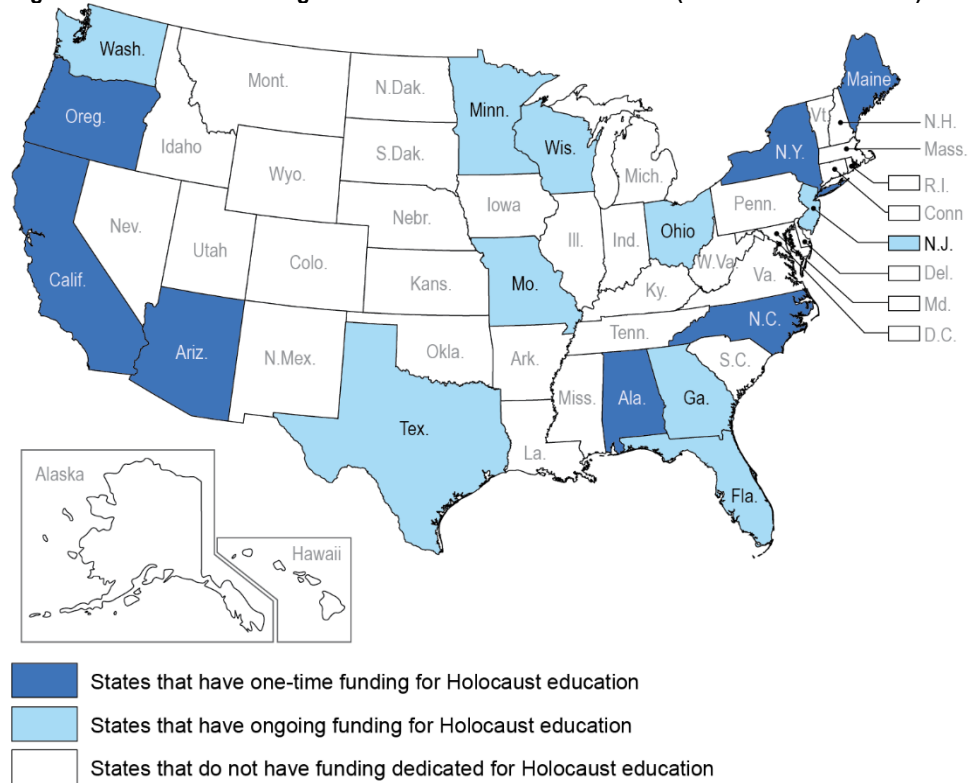
Note: GAO’s survey of 50 states and the District of Columbia (states) asked, “How, if at all, does your state educational agency ensure K–12 public school students are receiving Holocaust education?”. States were instructed to select more than one option, if appropriate. Of the 48 states that responded to the survey between January 2026 and March 2026, officials from 41 states responded to this question.

Of the 41 state officials that responded to this survey question, officials from 11 states said that their states had no system to ensure students received Holocaust education, and officials from two states we interviewed said they would support having accountability measures.⁶ For example, an official from one of these states said having schools be accountable through reporting or assessments would have helped improve the quality of how the Holocaust was taught. An official from the other state said an accountability system would have provided clarity and specificity on what to teach beyond the state’s academic standards.

How do states provide funding for K–12 Holocaust education?

Our review of publicly available state budget documents found that one-third (16 of 51) of states allocated one-time or ongoing funding for K–12 Holocaust education over the past 4 years, from fiscal years 2023 through 2026 (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: States with Funding Dedicated for Holocaust Education (Fiscal Years 2023-2026)



Source: GAO review of state budget documents for fiscal years 2023-2027. | GAO-26-108023

Seven states—Alabama, Arizona, California, Maine, New York, North Carolina, and Oregon—provided one-time funding specifically for Holocaust education ranging from \$9,000 to \$5 million over the past 4 years, according to our review of state budget documents. For example, California’s fiscal year 2025 budget allocated \$5 million in one-time funding to support the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education. The Collaborative is a statewide network of 14 Holocaust and genocide education organizations.

According to our review of state budget documents, nine states provided ongoing funding specifically for Holocaust education in amounts ranging from \$102,328 to \$1.1 million. For example, Florida’s fiscal year 2026 budget included an annual appropriation of \$600,000 to the Florida Holocaust Museum and \$100,000 to the Florida Holocaust Task Force. The Task Force coordinates Holocaust education activities on behalf of the Commissioner of Education.

In our state survey, we asked about how states use funds for Holocaust education. Of the officials from 11 states that answered this question, the most common responses were providing professional development for teachers (eight states), developing teacher materials (eight states), and distributing teaching materials or literature (eight states).⁷

How do state Holocaust commissions, task forces, or other groups support K–12 Holocaust education?

More than one-third of state officials (20 of 48) that responded to our survey said that their states had state Holocaust commissions, task forces, or other governmental entities dedicated to supporting Holocaust education in K–12 public schools.⁸ These officials reported differing levels of state involvement in supporting state Holocaust commissions.⁹ The most common level of involvement was including a state educational agency official within the Holocaust commission’s staff (12 states). Eight state officials also responded that their state received regular progress reports on Holocaust education from Holocaust commissions.

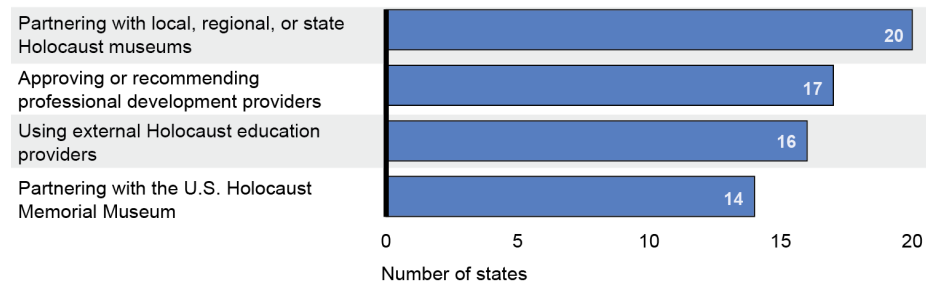
Our review of Holocaust commission or task force websites found that Holocaust education initiatives included providing curriculum, resources, and teacher professional development. For example:

- The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education reported designing, encouraging, and promoting the implementation of Holocaust and genocide education and awareness and provided assistance and advice to public schools to assist with planning courses of study on the Holocaust, among other initiatives.
- The South Carolina Council on the Holocaust reported having supported teacher professional development; special events that discussed Holocaust history, human rights, and genocide; and annual Holocaust commemorations around the state.
- The Ohio Holocaust & Genocide Memorial & Education Commission reported having disseminated Holocaust and genocide educational resources, among other things.

How do states describe facilitating or providing professional development for K–12 public school teachers on teaching about the Holocaust?

While few state officials we surveyed (three of 48) responded that they require this professional development, over half (26 of 48) responded that their state facilitated or provided professional development on teaching about the Holocaust.¹⁰ The most common way that state officials described doing so was through partnerships with state, local, or regional Holocaust museums (see fig. 4).¹¹

Figure 4: Types of Professional Development States Reported Facilitating or Providing to Teachers on Holocaust Education



Source: GAO survey of state educational agency officials. | GAO-26-108023

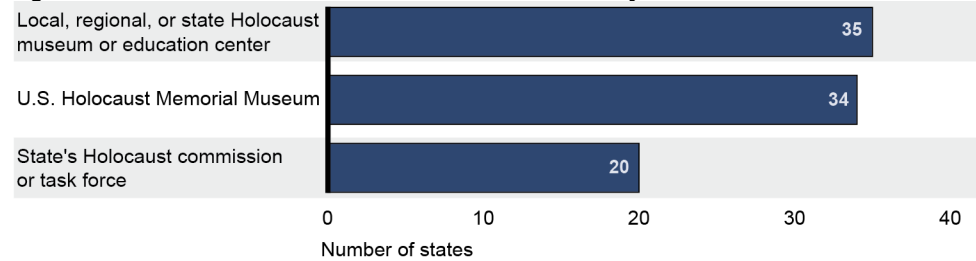
Note: GAO’s survey of 50 states and the District of Columbia (states) asked, “How does your state educational agency facilitate or provide teachers with Holocaust education training, either virtually or in-person?” States were instructed to select more than one option, if appropriate. Of the 48 states that responded to the survey between January 2026 and March 2026, 26 responded to this question.

In response to our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, 28 of 111 teachers responded that they received professional development on how to teach about the Holocaust.¹² These teachers commonly identified receiving professional development from the following sources:¹³ teachers’ conferences, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, their state or school district, and state or local Holocaust museums.¹⁴ One teacher stated that their state Holocaust museum had been the most instrumental in their teachings. This teacher noted that the professional development sessions and materials provided by the state museum were invaluable.

What sources did states describe using for educational materials to support K–12 Holocaust education?

More than three-quarters of state officials (40 of 48) who responded to our survey said their states distributed Holocaust educational materials from other organizations to support K–12 Holocaust education.¹⁵ The most common sources of Holocaust educational materials used by states were from local, regional, or state Holocaust museums (see fig. 5).¹⁶ Less than one-fourth of state officials we surveyed (10 of 48) responded that their states developed and distributed their own Holocaust educational materials.¹⁷ None of these 10 states required schools or school districts to use their materials.¹⁸

Figure 5: Sources of Holocaust Educational Materials Used by States



Source: GAO survey of state educational agency officials. | GAO-26-108023

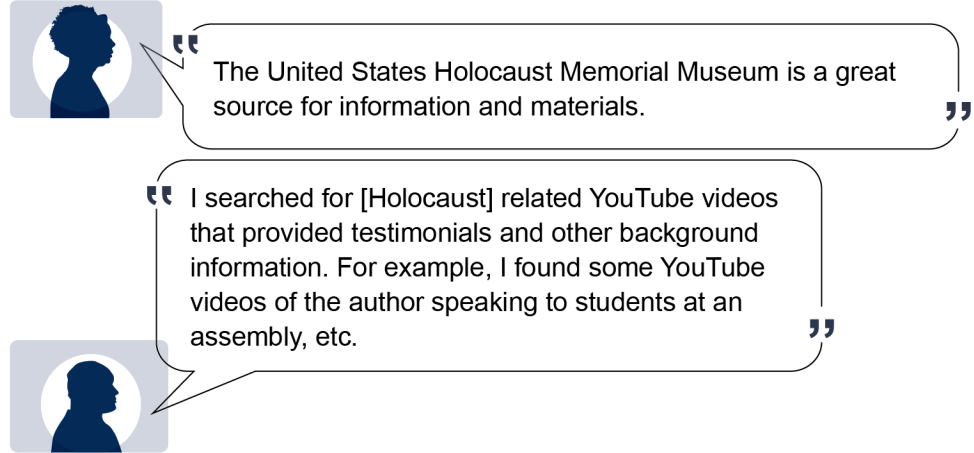
Note: GAO’s survey of 50 states and the District of Columbia (states) asked the following question, “From which organizations does your state educational agency get Holocaust educational materials?” States were instructed to select more than one option, if appropriate. Of the 48 states that responded to the survey between January 2026 and March 2026, officials from 40 states responded to this question.

Officials we interviewed from all four selected states said they relied on other groups or organizations to provide Holocaust education materials that they then distributed. An official from one state said they trusted educational materials from Echoes and Reflections and the U.S. Holocaust Museum because the materials were known to be strong national resources.¹⁹ An official from another state said their state also accessed educational materials from the U.S. Holocaust Museum as well as other well-known sources, such as the Anti-Defamation League. Additionally, this state official said that teachers also shared educational materials among themselves.

Of the state officials responding that their states used Holocaust materials from other organizations, almost three-quarters (29 of 40) also responded that their state vetted these Holocaust materials for things like age appropriateness or accuracy.²⁰ One state official responded in the survey that their state did not endorse any educational materials but ensured that the materials were provided from trusted partners, including government entities; were aligned with their state’s social studies standards; and were available at low or no cost to teachers. In our interviews, officials from two of our four selected states also said their states vetted Holocaust educational materials but were not aware of their states withholding certain educational materials as a result.

In response to our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, 70 of 111 teachers responded that they had acquired educational materials for teaching about the Holocaust (see fig. 6 for examples of responses from teachers about acquiring Holocaust materials).²¹ The most common ways teachers acquired these materials were by finding them on their own (56) or through the U.S. Holocaust Museum (51).²²

Figure 6: Examples of GAO Questionnaire Responses from Teachers About Acquiring Holocaust Educational Materials



Source: GAO analysis of teacher responses to nongeneralizable opt-in questionnaire. GAO (icons). | GAO-26-108023

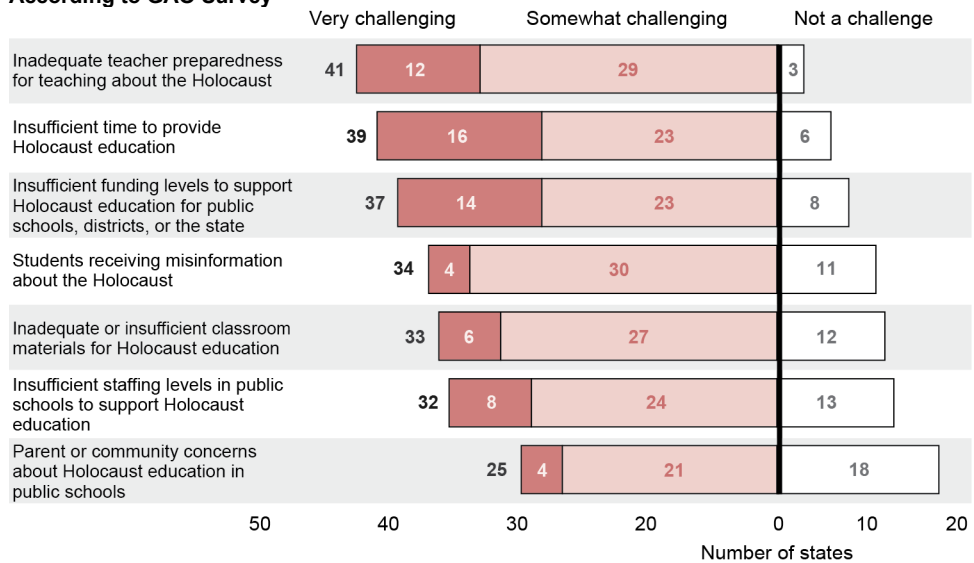
Note: Testimonials have been edited for readability—e.g., punctuation, spelling, and removal of names of individuals and facilities.

What challenges do educational professionals describe facing in supporting or providing K–12 Holocaust education?

State officials and teachers who responded to our survey or questionnaire cited several challenges in supporting or providing Holocaust education in K–12 public schools.

Challenges reported by states. According to our survey, the challenge most often cited by state officials was inadequate teacher preparedness for teaching about the Holocaust.²³ More than three-quarters of officials (41 of 48) reported that this was very or somewhat challenging. The next most often cited challenge was insufficient time to provide Holocaust education (39 or 48). See figure 7.

Figure 7: Challenges States Reported Facing in Providing or Supporting Holocaust Education, According to GAO Survey



Source: GAO survey of state educational agency officials. | GAO-26-108023

Note: GAO’s survey of 50 states and the District of Columbia (states) asked the following question: “How challenging are each of the following for your state educational agency in supporting Holocaust education for K–12 public school students?” Respondents were given the opportunity to rank each issue based on the level of challenge. Of the 48 states that responded to the survey between January 2026 and March 2026, officials from 48 responded to this question.

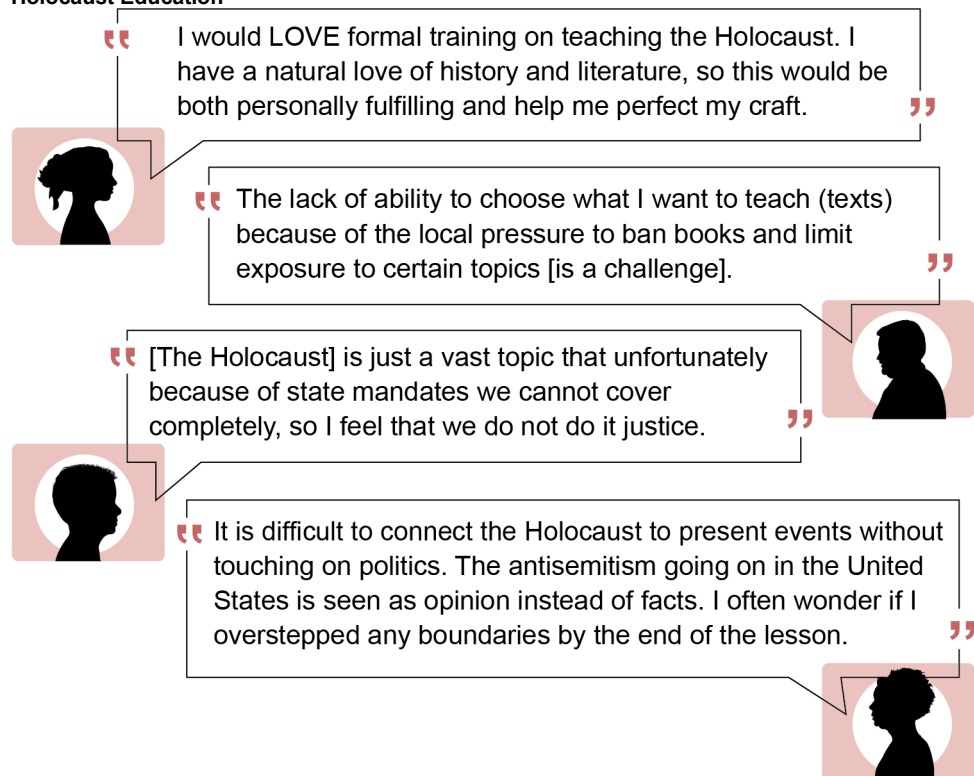
Officials we interviewed from all four selected states said they faced similar challenges with inadequate teacher preparedness. One state official said their state had reduced the training requirements to certify teachers to address their state’s teacher shortage. However, in doing so, the official said teachers were

entering the profession feeling unprepared to teach difficult topics, such as the Holocaust. Officials from two of these states said they addressed teacher preparedness issues by turning to local organizations for support, such as Holocaust museums that can provide training to teachers at no cost.

Officials we interviewed from three of our four selected states said they faced similar challenges with insufficient time to teach about the Holocaust. Officials from one of these states said teachers had to choose which parts of the Holocaust to cover because if they tried to teach about it in full, they would have to rush through the materials, which could lead to doing the topic a disservice. An official from another state said teachers were already pressed for time to address 25 or more academic standards per course, so balancing the time needed for Holocaust education was a concern.

Challenges reported by teachers. Of the 111 teachers who responded to our nongeneralizable opt-in questionnaire, 47 responded that access to Holocaust professional development made teaching about the Holocaust very or somewhat challenging (see fig. 8 for examples of responses from teachers about challenges they faced in providing Holocaust education).²⁴ Further, 42 teachers responded that their school district prioritizing other subjects over Holocaust education was very or somewhat challenging. Other challenges included connecting the Holocaust to historical or current events (24 teachers), restrictions on the use of materials (24 teachers), accessing Holocaust teaching resources (21 teachers), and antisemitism in the school or community (15 teachers).

Figure 8: Examples of GAO Questionnaire Responses About Challenges Teachers Face in Providing Holocaust Education



Source: GAO analysis of teacher responses to nongeneralizable opt-in questionnaire. GAO (icons). | GAO-26-108023

Note: Testimonials have been edited for readability—e.g., punctuation, spelling, and removal of names of individuals and facilities.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to the U.S. Holocaust Museum for review and comment. In its written response, which is reproduced in appendix I, the Museum expressed its appreciation for this work and emphasized the importance of continuing support for Holocaust education, including several of its new initiatives

in support of that goal. In addition, the Museum provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

How GAO Did This Study

Our review focused on the various entities that support K–12 Holocaust education. To understand these supports, we took a multi-pronged approach that included (1) a survey of state educational agency officials, (2) a structured questionnaire to solicit feedback from a nongeneralizable sample of teachers, (3) interviews with officials from selected states, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, and Holocaust organizations, and (4) a review of publicly available state documents, including academic standards and budget documents, as well as an independent legal review of state laws requiring Holocaust education.

Survey of state officials. To examine the supports states have provided for K–12 Holocaust education, we conducted a web-based survey of state educational agency officials in all 50 states and the District of Columbia from January through March 2026. We developed questions that were informed by a review of research related to K–12 Holocaust education and information collected through interviews with officials from the U.S. Holocaust Museum, state and local Holocaust museums, and professional organizations. We conducted pretests with state educational agency officials from three states to check for clarity of questions and flow of the survey and made revisions based on pretest feedback.

The survey focused on several topic areas, including (1) state requirements related to K–12 Holocaust education, including laws and academic standards; (2) funding for K–12 Holocaust education; (3) oversight of K–12 Holocaust educational requirements; (4) professional development specific to teaching about the Holocaust; and (5) distribution of K–12 Holocaust educational materials. The survey also collected information about the challenges states face in supporting Holocaust education. Survey recipients were encouraged to coordinate with colleagues when completing the survey, as needed.

We received responses from state educational agency officials in 47 states and the District of Columbia. Connecticut and North Carolina did not complete the survey. We removed Oregon from our analysis because their survey submission was incomplete. We reviewed responses for completeness and for adherence to survey logic rules (e.g., some questions were displayed only when a respondent provided a specific answer to a previous question). We found responses to be complete, clear, and sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our analysis.

Structured questionnaire of public school teachers. To better understand how Holocaust education is taught in K–12 public schools, we used a structured online questionnaire to solicit feedback from a nongeneralizable, opt-in sample of sixth through 12th grade teachers. The questionnaire focused on several topic areas, including (1) teacher professional development specific to teaching about the Holocaust, (2) where Holocaust educational materials are sourced, (3) level of comfort in teaching about the Holocaust, and (4) challenges teachers faced in teaching about the Holocaust. We conducted pretests of the questionnaire with three teachers to determine whether the questions were clear and unambiguous, terminology was used correctly, the questionnaire was not overly burdensome, and the questionnaire was comprehensive and unbiased. We made revisions based on pretest feedback. We sent our questionnaire to a nongeneralizable national sample of 2,063 public school teachers across the U.S. who taught sixth through 12th grade social studies, history, or English language arts. We received responses from a total of 111 teachers. The responses to our questionnaire are not generalizable.

Interviews. We conducted interviews with state educational agency officials from four states: Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont, and West Virginia. We selected

these states because they varied in their requirements for Holocaust education (e.g., having state academic standards that explicitly include the Holocaust or laws explicitly requiring K–12 public schools to teach about the Holocaust). We also considered factors such as geographic location and the state’s responses to our state survey. We also interviewed officials from Holocaust museums in five states: California, Florida, Illinois, Texas, and Washington. We selected these states based on geographic location and potential size of population that can access the museum. In addition, we interviewed officials from two professional Holocaust organizations: Echoes and Reflections and the Association of Holocaust Organizations. During the interviews we asked questions related to the initiatives used to support K–12 Holocaust education and any challenges they faced.

We also interviewed officials from the U.S. Holocaust Museum about how they used federal dollars to support K–12 Holocaust education. We also asked about the Museum’s support for state and local educational agencies, including the development and distribution of relevant educational materials and professional development for teachers.

State document review and independent legal analysis. We reviewed publicly available documentation from state government and other websites to identify states with academic standards specific to teaching about the Holocaust and funding dedicated to Holocaust education initiatives. We also conducted an independent legal review of state laws to identify state laws that explicitly require Holocaust education for K–12 public schools.

We conducted this performance audit from January 2025 to July 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

List of Addressees

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

GAO Contact Information

For more information, contact: Jackie Nowicki, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, NowickiJ@gao.gov.

Media Relations: Sarah Kaczmarek, Managing Director, Media@gao.gov.

Congressional Relations: David A. Powner, Acting Managing Director, CongRel@gao.gov.

Staff Acknowledgments: Lara Laufer (Assistant Director), Cynthia Nelson (Analyst in Charge), David Barish, Elizabeth Calderon, Daniel Corstange, David Forgosh, Stacia Odenwald, Rebecca Sero, Adam Wendel, Seline Wiedemer and John Yee.

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).
Subscribe to our [Email Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#).

Visit GAO on the web at <https://www.gao.gov>.

This is a work of the U.S. government but may include copyrighted material. For details, see <https://www.gao.gov/copyright>.

Appendix I: Comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

June 22, 2026

Dear Jacqueline Nowicki,

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is grateful for this extensive study of Holocaust education in all 50 states. It will continue to bring attention to the importance of Holocaust education for our nation, which is more important than ever given the rise of Holocaust denial and antisemitism. Because education is constantly changing and evolving, the Museum is responding in real time to meet the challenges and opportunities the study outlines. Thanks to the Never Again Education Act funding in recent years, the Museum has begun significantly expanding its work with secondary educators across the U.S. We are very gratified by the participation of state officials in this study and their expressions of interest in expanding Holocaust education in their respective states.

Given that our research indicates declining basic historical literacy and increasing skepticism among students about the basic facts of the Holocaust, the Museum has developed several new initiatives to reach and engage teachers nationwide. They include: expanding our teacher network; creating and disseminating resources; providing professional development; convening state administrators and local Holocaust education experts; and conducting research to improve the effectiveness of Holocaust education for the entire field.

The Museum's multi-disciplinary resources help ensure students learn about how and why the Holocaust happened and the critical role of antisemitism in making it possible. All of the resources utilize primary sources and authentic evidence that promote the truth of the Holocaust and help personalize the history. We have also modified our professional development programs to address today's new realities. Across the board, the number of teachers engaged with the Museum, the use of the Museum's resources, and the participation in our professional development conferences have all increased substantially every year over the past four years. Strong bipartisan support from Congress and our federal status give us widespread public trust that enables this work to continue to grow in all 50 states.

The Museum provides virtual professional development offerings for teachers and resources for Social Studies and English Language Arts classrooms, including those with limited time to address the Holocaust. These materials are designed to be easily adapted to meet the requirements in various states and districts, such as state standards and mandates. To complement all these efforts and ensure additional support for teachers, the Museum's work with state-level education leaders and Holocaust centers provides training and resources needed to implement innovative approaches that meet the local needs of educators.

Finally, thanks to the Never Again Education Act, which enabled us to expand our work and get a much better understanding of the challenges of the field of Holocaust education, the Museum has begun conceptualizing the creation of a Holocaust Education Research Center that will conduct ongoing research and evaluation that will help all Holocaust education practitioners

understand what is needed and most effective in educating youth so they can increase their impact on students.

With the likelihood that most – if not all – young people have been or will be exposed to Holocaust denial, all of this work has become increasingly urgent.

Sincerely,

Sara Bloomfield, Director
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Endnotes

¹U.S. Holocaust Museum officials said the Museum is the main federal source for Holocaust education resources. Museum officials said they work periodically with colleagues at the U.S. Department of Education, Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which may offer relevant grants or some Holocaust educational materials and resources to any individual or group that requests them. We asked officials at these agencies about their work in providing Holocaust education resources for K–12 public schools and found their roles to be limited.

²Additionally, the U.S. Holocaust Museum used \$346,863 in federal funding from its marketing budget to promote Holocaust education nationwide.

³We identified states with academic standards on the Holocaust if the academic standards explicitly used the word “Holocaust.” For example, Wisconsin’s academic standards are more broadly written and do not include the word “Holocaust”, so we did not identify Wisconsin as having standards that require teaching the Holocaust. Wisconsin’s social studies guidance includes the Holocaust as a topic for exploration. Similarly, Kansas’s academic standards include the Holocaust as a suggested

topic, but not within the standard itself. It was not within the scope of our review to conduct an independent legal review of state academic standards.

⁴In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state educational agency plan to add, remove, or update any or all parts of existing standards of learning related to teaching about the Holocaust within the next 3 years?” We provided the following answer choices: “No” or “Yes.”

⁵In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Since September 2024, has your state’s legislature proposed new laws, or changes to existing laws, related to Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?” We provided the following answer choices: “No” or “Yes (please describe).”

⁶In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “How, if at all, does your state educational agency ensure K-12 public school students are receiving Holocaust education?” We provided the following answer choices with instructions to select all that applied: “a) Your state educational agency does not have any measures to ensure students receive Holocaust education”; “b) State audits of school or district curricula”; “c) Reporting requirements for schools and districts”; “d) Integration of Holocaust topics into state assessments”; “d) Feedback from teachers and students (formal or informal)”; “e) Other (please explain).”

⁷In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “What activities does your state fund for Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?” We provided the following answer choices with the option to select “Yes” or “No” for each: “a) Training teachers”; “b) Developing teaching materials”; “c) Acquiring teaching materials or literature”; “d) Distributing educational materials”; “e) Sponsoring field trips to museums”; “f) Sponsoring extracurricular programs”; “g) Sponsoring Holocaust remembrance events.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “What other activities does your state fund for Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?”

⁸In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state have a Holocaust commission, Holocaust task force, or some other governmental group dedicated to supporting Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?” We provided the following answer choices: “No,” “Yes,” or “Don’t Know.”

⁹In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “What role, if any, does your state educational agency have related to the state’s Holocaust commission, task force, or other group?” We provided the following answer choices with instructions to select all that applied: “a) Your state educational agency does not have a role within the group”; “b) The group’s staff includes officials from your state educational agency”; “c) Your state educational agency receives regular progress reports on Holocaust education”; or “d) Your state educational agency has authority to approve changes to proposed Holocaust education.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “What other role(s) does your state educational agency have in relation to the state’s Holocaust commission, task force, or other group?”

¹⁰In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state require Holocaust education training for teachers who teach about the Holocaust?” We provided the following answer choices: “No” or “Yes.” Additionally, we asked, “Does your state educational agency facilitate or provide Holocaust education training to teachers?” We provided the following answer choices: “No” or “Yes.”

¹¹In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “How does your state educational agency facilitate or provide teachers with Holocaust education training, either virtually or in-person?” We provided the following answer choices with instructions to select “Yes” or “No” for each: “a) Sponsor Holocaust education training for teachers by external providers”; “b) Partner with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to provide Holocaust education training for teachers”; “c) Partner with local, regional, or state Holocaust museums to provide Holocaust education training for teachers”; “d) Approve or recommend professional development providers.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “How else does your state educational agency facilitate or provide teachers with Holocaust education training?”

¹²In our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, we asked, “Have you received training on how to teach about the Holocaust?” We provided the following answer choices: “Yes” or “No.”

¹³Officials from all five Holocaust museums we spoke with said they offer a range of supports for K–12 Holocaust education, including relevant professional development for teachers, museum tours for students, and educational materials. For example, staff from one Holocaust museum we interviewed said its literature-based teaching trunk program provides a wide array of educational materials and lesson plans on different themes and topics to support Holocaust education.

¹⁴In our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, we asked, “From where did you receive your training on how to teach about the Holocaust?” We provided the following answer choices with

the option to select “Yes,” “No,” or “Not Sure” for each: “a) The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum”; “b) State or local Holocaust museums or education centers”; “c) State educational agency or school district”; “d) Teachers’ conference, seminar, webinar, or other event”; “e) Pre-service teacher training”; “f) Another teacher.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “Where else did you receive your training on how to teach about the Holocaust?”

¹⁵In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state educational agency distribute Holocaust educational materials FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, such as a local Holocaust museum or education center?” We provided the following answer choices: “Yes” or “No.”

¹⁶In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “From which organizations does your state educational agency get Holocaust educational materials?” We provided the following answer choices with the option to select “Yes” or “No” for each: “a) State’s Holocaust commission or task force”; “b) U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum”; “c) Local, regional, or state Holocaust museum or education center.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “From which other organizations does your state educational agency get Holocaust educational materials?”

¹⁷In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state educational agency develop and distribute ITS OWN Holocaust educational materials for teachers or students, such as lesson plans, informational posters, or videos?” We provided the following answer choices: “Yes” or “No.”

¹⁸In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Are schools or school districts required to use the materials that your state educational agency develops?” We provided the following answer choices: “Yes” or “No.”

¹⁹ Echoes and Reflections is a partnership of three leaders in Holocaust education—the Anti-Defamation League, USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem, according to the Echoes and Reflections website. The website also states that the mission of Echoes and Reflections is to provide teachers with resources and professional development to teach about the Holocaust responsibly, accurately, and effectively.

²⁰In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “Does your state educational agency vet Holocaust educational materials, such as for age appropriateness or accuracy?” We provided the following answer choices: “No” or “Yes (please describe).”

²¹In our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, we asked, “Have you been provided with (or curated your own) educational materials for teaching about the Holocaust?” We provided the following answer choices: “Yes” or “No.”

²²In our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, we asked, “From which of the following sources did you get your Holocaust teaching resources, like lesson plans or materials?” We provided the following answer choices with the option to select “Yes,” “No,” or “Not Sure” for each: “a) The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum”; “b) State or local Holocaust museums or education centers”; “c) State educational agency or school district”; “d) State Holocaust commission or task force”; “e) Professional Holocaust educational organizations (e.g., Echoes and Reflections);” “f) Another teacher”; “g) Self-developed materials.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “From which other sources did you get your Holocaust teaching resources?”

²³In our survey of state educational agency officials, we asked, “How challenging are each of the following for your state educational agency in supporting Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?” We provided the following answer choices with the option to select “Not at all challenging,” “Somewhat challenging,” or “Very challenging” for each: “a) Insufficient staffing levels in public schools to support Holocaust education”; “b) Insufficient funding levels to support Holocaust education for public schools, districts, or the state”; “c) Inadequate teacher preparedness for teaching about the Holocaust”; “d) Parent or community concerns about Holocaust education in public schools”; “e) Students receiving misinformation about the Holocaust”; “f) Inadequate or insufficient classroom materials for Holocaust education”; “g) Insufficient time to provide Holocaust education.” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question: “What other challenges, if any, has your state educational agency experienced in supporting Holocaust education for K-12 public school students?”

²⁴In our nongeneralizable opt-in teacher questionnaire, we asked, “How challenging do you find each of the following issues when teaching about the Holocaust?” We provided the following answer choices with the option to select “Not at all challenging,” “Somewhat challenging,” or “Very challenging” for each: “a) Access to Holocaust teaching resources (e.g., lesson plans, materials);” “b) School district prioritizes other topics”; “c) Connecting the Holocaust to related events, past or present”; “d) Access to teacher training about the Holocaust”; “e) Some materials are prohibited from being used to teach about the Holocaust”; “f) Antisemitism in school or the community”; “g) Something else (please explain).” Additionally, we asked the following open-ended question:

“Do you have any additional information you could provide about the challenges you’ve faced in teaching about the Holocaust, including how you overcame these challenges? If so, please describe.”