

Combating Antisemitism Through Education

Introduction

This document serves to provide information about historical and contemporary antisemitism, as well as how to combat its manifestations in society.

According to the [US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) released in May of 2023.

Antisemitism is often called “the oldest hatred,” yet it remains all too present today—including in America. Acts of antisemitism are on the rise—including online harassment, vandalism, bomb threats, and violent attacks against Jewish institutions and Jewish people.

In 2022, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher Wray noted that American Jews account for 2.4% of the U.S. population, but antisemitism drove 63% of reported religiously motivated hate crimes.³ Perhaps most alarming, antisemitism has become increasingly “normalized” in American society.

(US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, p. 6)

Below is information on defining antisemitism, as well as resources on identification and prevention of this form of bias. Additionally, you will find legal requirements that districts, schools, and other educational bodies must follow in order to protect Jewish students, families, and community members, from prejudice, discrimination, and violence. It is incumbent on all of us to engage with combatting antisemitism.

Defining Antisemitism

It is important to familiarize yourself with a scholarly-informed definition of antisemitism. The [State of Washington’s DEI Glossary](#) (p.3) as well as [OSPI’s Culturally Responsive Style Guide](#) (p.44) defines antisemitism as follows:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”¹

This definition comes from the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#), the world’s foremost network of governments and experts that seek to strengthen, advance, and

¹ Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle and the U.S Department of State Accessed July 20, 2023. [Puget Sound Jewish Community Statement on Antisemitism](#) via [The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) & [U.S. Department of State](#) and views the definition as “...integral to the fight to eliminate this scourge [of antisemitism].”



promote Holocaust education, research, and remembrance. The definition has been adopted by 1,116+ entities, 39 countries, 464+ regional, state, and local government bodies, and the Global Imams Council. It is also utilized by the US Department of State. Locally, it has been adopted by the [Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Seattle](#) and is referred to by the White House as the most prominent definition adopted by institutions.

Title VI Protections for Jewish Students, Families, and Communities

“The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects all students from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department. This fact sheet describes ways this protection covers students who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or of another religious group.”ⁱ

Jewish students, families and community members are protected via Department of Education’s Title VI, i.e., protection from discrimination based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.

ED provided clarification through a [fact sheet](#) in January of 2023, and re-affirmed these protections via a [Dear Colleagues letter](#) published in tandem with the US National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism.

Any program that is receiving federal financial assistance must comply.

Washington state protects Jewish individuals through its anti-discrimination law depending on situational circumstances and alignment of the individual to the state’s protected classes (i.e., religion, national origin, and creed).

Books on Antisemitism

Below are highly recommended reads on contemporary antisemitism:

- [Antisemitism: Here and Now, by Deborah Lipstadt](#)
 - The award-winning author of *The Eichmann Trial and Denial: Holocaust History on Trial* gives us a penetrating and provocative analysis of the hate that will not die, focusing on its current, virulent incarnations on both the political right and left: from white supremacist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia, to mainstream enablers of antisemitism such as Donald Trump and Jeremy Corbyn, to a gay pride march in Chicago that expelled a group of women for carrying a Star of David banner.

- [How to Combat Anti-Semitism, by Bari Weiss](#)
 - How to Fight Anti-Semitism, written by journalist Bari Weiss, explores the history and current manifestations of antisemitism and attempts to provide strategies to oppose it.

- [Jews Don't Count, by David Baddiel](#)
 - Jews Don't Count is a book for people on the right side of history. People fighting the good fight against homophobia, disablism, transphobia and, particularly, racism. People, possibly, like you. It is the comedian and writer David Baddiel's contention that one type of racism has been left out of this fight. In his unique combination of reasoning, polemic, personal experience and jokes, Baddiel argues that those who think of themselves as on the right side of history have often ignored the history of anti-Semitism. He outlines why and how, in a time of intensely heightened awareness of minorities, Jews don't count as a real minority.

Resources from Echoes and Reflections

Please, access the below links for lessons, videos, readings, and resources for teachers and learners. Additional resources can be found on this [document](#). They are curated by [Echoes and Reflections](#), an educational organization which unites the efforts of the [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#), [USC Shoah Foundation](#), and [Yad Vashem](#).

- [ADL: Antisemitism Uncovered](#)
- [Library of Congress: Haven to Home](#)
- [Yad Vashem Antisemitism After the Holocaust](#)
- [Echoes & Reflections Pyramid of Hate](#)
- [Yad Vashem: The Nature of Antisemitism](#)
- [Antisemitism Over Time](#)
- [ADL Hate Symbols database](#)
- [Antisemitism and the 3Ds Worksheet](#)

Resources from the Holocaust Center for Humanity

Additionally, please below find resources from [the Holocaust Center for Humanity \(HCH\)](#).

Through education, events, field trips, museum visits, and community programs, the Holocaust Center for Humanity remains dedicated to its responsibility to fight hate by educating students, teachers, and the general public about the dangers of intolerance and the difference each one of us can make.

Teaching and Learning Best Practices

[Washington State law](#) requires that beginning September 1, 2020, middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools that offer Holocaust instruction must follow [Best Practices](#). The Best

Practices lessons here are not exclusive. There are countless other high quality lessons, but for reasons of brevity, we have made a selection to highlight.

Speakers Bureau

The mission of the [Speakers Bureau](#) is to provide a personal connection to the Holocaust for students of all ages, and show them a human face and story that listeners can reflect upon to confront bigotry and intolerance today. Hearing speakers give testimony helps students find their own voice, and helps teach them to be responsible citizens in our community, our nation, and our world.

Survivor Encyclopedia

[The Survivor Encyclopedia](#) project features survivors and eye-witnesses who live or have lived in Washington State. These survivors, with their history and stories, have shaped our community, contributing to its richness and diversity. They challenge us to understand history through personal narrative - to see complex human beings behind the facts. Their stories inspire us to recognize human fragility and resilience and the difference that each one of us can make.

Educating for Change: Ensuring Holocaust Remembrance in WA-State

On April 15th, 2021, [the Holocaust Center for Humanity](#) partnered with [Akiva Erezim](#) of System and School Improvement at OSPI, to curate a presentation available to all Washington educators on Holocaust Education. Holocaust survivor [Peter Metzelaar](#) also provided testimony of his experiences. The presentation [can be viewed in its entirety on the OSPI YouTube channel](#).

- Additionally, a supplemental resources document was created for the presentation: [Educating for Change in WA-State: Resources for Holocaust Remembrance](#)

Then and There, Here and Now: Holocaust Education and Memory in WA-State

On April 28th, 2022, another presentation was delivered by OSPI and HCH featuring a panel of survivor [Carla Peperzak](#) and her two daughters. It is also [available on YouTube](#).

Contacts

Questions about [Holocaust and Genocide Education](#) in WA-State or an [incident of antisemitism or bias](#) in your learning community? Please, do not hesitate to reach out.

To report an incident of antisemitism (and other kinds of) bias, discrimination, or violence, please contact OSPI's [Office of Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#), Tel. (360) 725-6162, TTY: (360) 664-3631. You can learn more about student rights here on [the OCR webpage](#).

OSPI Contact:

Akiva Erezim, Holocaust and Genocide Education Liaison, and Program Supervisor of Continuous Improvement, OSPI at akiva.erezim@k12.wa.us.

HCH Contact:

For more information on Holocaust/Genocide Education with Holocaust Center for Humanity, email [Branda Anderson](mailto:Branda.Anderson), HCH Teaching and Learning Specialist.

ADL Contact

For more information on fighting antisemitism, bias, racism, hate, and violence, email the education team at ADL Pacific Northwest at PacNWEdu@adl.org.

ⁱ [FACT SHEET: Protecting Students from Discrimination Based on Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics. US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights \(OCR\). Accessed July 20, 2023, originally published January 2023.](#)