

# Genocide Education in Massachusetts Middle & High Schools: Executive Summary

*A Statewide Landscape Analysis by MC<sup>2</sup> Education and Partners*

October 2024

In 2021, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed Bill H. 692 Genocide Education, which required its districts to implement genocide education instruction in middle and high schools. At the time of this brief, Massachusetts was among 41 states that encouraged or required genocide education in some form. Twenty-eight states mandated Holocaust education specifically,<sup>1</sup> and 21 of those states required education on other genocides as well.<sup>2</sup>

Instituting requirements for Holocaust and genocide education represents an important step, along with ensuring that policymakers and practitioners understand the type, amount, and quality of genocide education being offered to youth.<sup>3</sup> In 2023, the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), contracted MC<sup>2</sup> Education LLC (MC<sup>2</sup> Education) to conduct a landscape analysis and evaluation of the DESE Genocide Education Grant. This landscape analysis describes district-level efforts in Massachusetts to provide genocide education, coupled with classroom-level information from district leaders and classroom teachers reporting on their experiences, perceptions, comfort, and concerns about genocide education.

Findings in this summary are based on a representative sample of 111 districts across the state<sup>4</sup>, and are selected highlights. The full report, linked below, includes greater detail on the evaluation.

## GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICTS

Most districts are meeting their requirements to offer courses to secondary students in grades 9-11. District survey responses showed three-quarters of districts reported offering at least one required course covering genocide education, and those required courses are predominantly taught in social studies/history.

96% of educators reported 'providing historical context about genocide education' as their most common pedagogical strategy.

### Exhibit 1: Courses Covering Genocide Education Reported by District Leaders (n=91)

1 or more required courses, any subject area



1 or more required courses, outside of social studies/history



1 or more required courses at each grade level

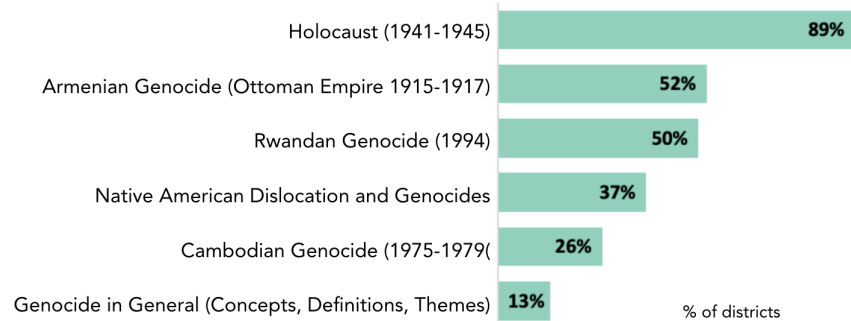


Read Exhibit 1 as: "Seventy-six percent of the 91 respondent districts have one or more required courses covering genocide education in any subject area."

Source: MC<sup>2</sup> Education-Administered 2024 Genocide Education District Survey.

District leaders shared which genocide topics were covered in required courses in their districts. The Holocaust was by far the most frequently covered topic, covered by about 90% of districts.

**Exhibit 2: Top Six Genocide Topics Covered in Required Courses Reported by District Leaders**



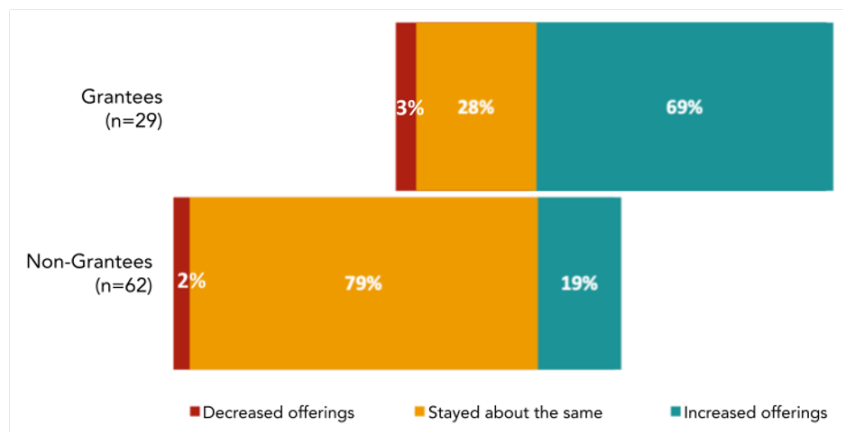
Read Exhibit 2 as: "Eighty-nine percent of district respondents reported that the Holocaust is covered in their required courses."  
 Source: MC² Education-Administered 2024 Genocide Education District Survey.

## PARTICIPATION IN GENOCIDE EDUCATION GRANT: OUTCOMES AND REPORTED USES OF GRANT FUNDS

Most grantee districts reported having expanded genocide education offerings in the 2023-2024 school year (compared to the prior year), chiefly through increased numbers of teachers, grade levels, and students participating, and by expanding professional development opportunities.

The district survey respondents included both grantee (n=29) and non-grantee (n=62) districts, and respondents from grantee districts were substantially more likely to report that they had expanded their offerings; very few respondents in either group indicated decreases in courses addressing genocide education.

**Exhibit 3: Changes in Genocide Education Offerings from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 School Year Reported by District Leaders**



Read Exhibit 3 as: "Sixty-nine percent of grantees reported increases in their genocide education offerings from the 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 school year."  
 Source: MC² Education-Administered 2024 Genocide Education District Survey.

Grantee recipient districts were most likely to report spending their grant funds on offering professional development and developing curricula, most often in 8th through 12th grades. Indeed, grantee educators were five times more likely than non-grantee educators to report having attended professional development on genocide education in the 2023-2024 school year.

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## SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES NEEDED

Both district and educator respondents reported similar needs for support in providing high-quality genocide education. There was slight variation in which need was ranked first, second, and third for each group.

Each group listed the following as their top needs for providing high-quality genocide education:

- Instructional resources and curricula
- Professional development about content and/or pedagogy
- Time for planning

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## NOTES

**Complete Report:** For our complete report, including the 2023-2024 School Year Genocide Education Grant Evaluation Report, please see <https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2024/10-genocide-education.pdf>.

**About the Authors:** For more information about the authors see: [www.mc2educationllc.com](http://www.mc2educationllc.com)

### Endnotes:

1. <https://echoesandreflections.org/interactive-map/> and <https://tinyurl.com/asumandatesreport>
2. <https://echoesandreflections.org/interactive-map/>
3. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2024/05/03/holocaust-education-mixed-bag-us-schools>
4. The sample of districts is representative of the state; however the sample of educators is not.