

67% of Ontario Grade 6 Students Think the Holocaust Could Happen Again

New survey of more than 11,000 students highlights understanding of the Holocaust and antisemitism

TORONTO, ON (January 27, 2025) - Today, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a survey conducted by Holocaust education organization Liberation75 finds that 67% of students think the Holocaust could happen again.

The *2024 Survey of Ontario Grade 6 Students on the Holocaust and Antisemitism* was conducted to evaluate whether the mandated curriculum put in place in 2023 was effective in teaching factual information, and to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to the Holocaust, antisemitism, and discrimination.

The pre-treatment survey was completed by more than 11,000 Ontario grade 6 students in January 2024 with a key takeaway that 67% of students said they think the Holocaust could happen again.

A post-treatment survey was completed in June 2024 by more than 5,000 grade 6 students that had participated in Liberation75's educational program. Key findings showed that:

- 66% of respondents said Jewish people experience antisemitism a lot or sometimes in Ontario.
- 56% of respondents said that 'when antisemitism happens in Ontario it is a big problem that needs urgent attention'.
- 29% of students said Canada should be doing more to combat hate today.
- 29% of students said they wanted to fight antisemitism in Canada.

Additionally, there was a major improvement in students' understanding of the Holocaust, with 81% of students, up from 67%, affirming that the Holocaust happened and that six million Jewish people were murdered.

"We learned a lot from this study. Grade 6 students know what Jews are - even though 74% are not sure they have ever met a Jewish person. They see antisemitism and they believe it is an urgent problem. They want to learn about the Holocaust and 92% recommend that other students learn about it too. They want to fight antisemitism and think Canada should do more to fight it too," said Marilyn Sinclair, Founder of Liberation75.

In the spring of 2021, Liberation75 conducted a pre/post-educational treatment survey on nearly 3,600 students across Canada and the United States. The goal was to understand what students in grades 6-12 knew and believed about the Holocaust and antisemitism. The results found that *one in three respondents believed that the Holocaust was exaggerated, fabricated, or that they were not sure what to think*. In response, the Province of Ontario enacted a Holocaust

education mandate for grade 6 students — the first in Canada — effective September 2023. New and expanded mandatory learning about the Holocaust in the compulsory Grade 10 history course will be instituted beginning September 2025. Liberation75, in collaboration with other Holocaust organizations, partnered with Ontario’s Ministry of Education to support the implementation of this mandate.

Holocaust education became mandatory in other provinces and territories across Canada in 2024 and will be implemented in British Columbia, Yukon, and Saskatchewan in 2025. Alberta and Manitoba committed to the mandates but are still determining the details.

“Our study has shown that grade 6 is the perfect time to teach about the Holocaust and antisemitism. The stories of the Holocaust teach our students to recognize hate and it shapes their sense of social responsibility and moral action. With antisemitism at an all-time high and access to Holocaust survivor witnesses becoming increasingly difficult, we encourage all provincial governments to prioritize this learning,” said Sinclair. “Governments must continue to provide funding for these essential resources.”

The survey was conducted by Alexis Lerner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science at The U.S. Naval Academy, on behalf of Liberation75. For the full survey results, visit liberation75.org/2024survey.

About Liberation75

Founded in 2018, Liberation75 is committed to ensuring that all students learn about the Holocaust so they can fight antisemitism and other forms of hate and intolerance and build a better future for the province. Liberation75 has educated more than 875,000 students and 19,000 teachers and has provided more than 80,000 free books and resources to Ontario grade 6 students in support of the new curriculum.

For more information on Liberation75, visit www.liberation75.org.

Media Contact:

Sarah Tratt

The Narrative Agency

sarah@thenarrativeagency.com

416.577.2138