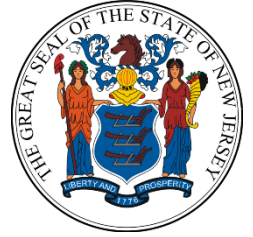


**State of New Jersey
Commission on Holocaust Education**

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<http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/>

New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education
1st Quarter Commission Meeting
New Jersey Department of Education
Friday, September 19, 2025
11:00 am
Minutes

Presiding: Maud Dahme, Chair

Managing Director/ST: Brianna Doherty

Present Constituting a Quorum:

Tamara Beatty
Nicholas Capuano
Maud Dahme
Phil Kirschner
Igor Kotler
Michelle Myers
Irvin Moreno Rodriguez
Jody Olesh
Marvin Raab
Rabbi Avi Richler
Shana Stein
Colleen Tambuscio
Gene Woods

Staff (not constituting a quorum)

Brianna Doherty
Jessica McAuliffe
Sara Fernandez

Absent

Allison Connolly
Abe Foxman
Ilyse Shainbrown
Frank Stebbins
Yitz Stern
Elyse Wolff

The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education Chair, Maud Dahme, convened the public meeting at 11:25 a.m. with the reading of the statement pertaining to the public session of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education as it complies with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

The Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Department of Education, Secretary of State's Office, and notice was also given to the State House Press Corps, the Governor's Office, and Commission Members.

And seeing there was a quorum, the meeting of September 19, 2025, was called to order.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education approved the minutes of the public meetings conducted on June 13, 2025.

Executive Committee Report

Chair Report – Maud Dahme

The Chair provided remarks on the success of the 2025 Summer Seminar and announced that the reunion would take place on Sunday, September 21, 2025. The Chair went on to provide an update on the 2026 Summer Seminar. Brianna Doherty and Joe Nappi will be going to the NJEA Executive Committee Meeting to ask about the scholarship funds for its members to attend the trip.

The Chair asked that all requests—whether for speakers, books, professional development, resources, or other questions—be directed through Brianna Doherty. This helps ensure that the Commission maintains a clear record of requests and responses. By keeping everything centralized, Brianna Doherty will be able to provide accurate updates, track communication with schools and districts, and ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

The Chair also asked Commission members to share any programs or events that they have attended since the last Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Report – Marvin Raab

The Vice Chair shared that he spoke at the Wally and Lutz Hammerslag Lecture this summer, hosted by the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center at Stockton University.

The Vice Chair provided an update on the virtual guided tours of Sobibor and Majdanek. Brianna Doherty compiled a report, which was shared with both Sobibor and Majdanek.

Virtual Guided Tour	Students	Educators	Community
Sobibor	5633	45	33
Majdanek	1769	37	32

The Vice Chair, Managing Director of the Commission, and Director of the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center met with the team at the Sobibor Museum to discuss the last year of tours, the plan for the upcoming year, and the procedure for conducting tours during the upcoming year. There will be a meeting with the Majdanek State Museum regarding the same information. Brianna Doherty has created a page on our website specifically for these virtual guided tours.

<https://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/curr/tours/>

The Vice Chair also proposed that the Commission speak with centers to suggest that they may want to work together if they bring buses to the United Nations in NYC for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Managing Director/Secretary Treasurer Report – Brianna Doherty

Folders were distributed containing flyers for upcoming programs, an Auschwitz Museum article featuring Sarah Coykendall of Kean University, and a summary of Commission awards. Efforts are underway to reinstate the awards, though challenges remain with the Axelrod Award endowment.

The annual Center Director Meeting in August included 15 centers, with a presentation on the *Heroes of the Holocaust* Art Exhibit opening at Kean this fall. Centers shared updates, with funding as the main challenge. Highlights included new coursework, student engagement programs, community outreach, fellowships, and leadership transitions. Sponsorship grants will again be offered and are expected to be competitive.

With the start of the school year, speaker and PD requests have increased. Programs are scheduled with Maud Dahme, Amy Goodwin, Colleen, and others, along with new requests from schools and organizations across the state. PD sessions are scheduled with Middlesex County, Upper Township, and Cranberry K–8. County round table presentations will be arranged following the high school curriculum update.

The Commission library is being reorganized, with surplus resources shared with Rowan. The Chair and Managing Director attended the NJ Native American Affairs Commission meeting to provide an update on curriculum work related to Indigenous Peoples; the reception was very supportive. Finally, the Commission has been invited to partner on a Mercer County Educator Workshop with Mercer County Community College and the Jewish Federation of Princeton Mercer Bucks, tentatively scheduled for early March.

Standing Committee Reports

Budget/Fundraising Committee

Phil Kirschner was selected as Chair of the Committee. The group reviewed the current budget, noting a \$255,000 annual appropriation and \$110,381 in the donation account, which is reserved for emergencies. The committee discussed funding priorities, including the Anne Frank exhibit, requiring \$30,000, which will be covered through the donation account. Estimated co-sponsorships for centers are projected at \$50,000 for the year. Concerns were raised about future budget constraints, and the committee agreed to begin preparing a formal budget proposal early, requesting approximately \$297,000–\$298,000 for the next fiscal year, to be submitted through the Department and later supported by legislators.

Legislative Committee

Frank Stebbins was selected as Chair. Key priorities include improved tracking of legislative activities, with Brianna Doherty pursuing DOE software licenses to monitor keywords related to Holocaust and genocide education.

The committee discussed preparing for potential leadership changes after the upcoming election. A new database has been created to track legislators, contact information, district assignments, and notes, which will be available in the committee drive.

Members agreed to develop templated communication materials, including a one-pager and legislative briefing packet, with information tailored to specific districts using survey data. Priority outreach targets include Education Committee chairs, the Speaker, Senate President, and Appropriations Committee chairs.

The committee also emphasized relationship-building, suggesting invitations to legislators for educational awards and recognition events, as well as more informal outreach to their offices for programming opportunities.

Education Committee

Colleen Tambuscio was selected as Chair. The committee reviewed curriculum updates, professional development initiatives, evaluation and assessment goals, and strategies to expand the Student Survivor Project. Subcommittees have been established for curriculum, PD, evaluation and assessment, and student survivor work.

Curriculum: The updated high school Holocaust curriculum is live on the website, with minor edits pending. Work has begun on a long-term Indigenous Histories curriculum in partnership with the Native American Commission and Ramapo College. Ongoing projects include lesson development for the Lives Eliminated, Dreams Illuminated art exhibit in Jersey City and a teacher's guide for Richard Horowitz's *In the Garden of the Righteous*.

Professional Development: Draft presentations are being piloted, covering Commission resources and tailored content. A PD "menu" is being developed for distribution. Partnerships continue with USHMM, with consideration for both introductory and advanced seminars. Other initiatives include a 12-week asynchronous PD pilot with Stockton University and possible future collaboration with Alexandra Zapruder.

Evaluation and Assessment: Plans include developing grade-specific toolkits, enhancing accessibility for students with disabilities, and creating promotional materials such as newsletters and videos. The committee aims to expand genocide and human rights content, highlight successful districts, and build resources for pre-service teachers. Partnerships with NJEA, Ramapo, and Kean are being explored.

Student Survivor Project: The committee will expand the program by partnering with at least four districts annually, with initial outreach handled by the Commission office. Collaboration with centers will be included where possible.

The committee emphasized reintroducing the Commission to new educators and administrators through county roundtables, workshops, and marketing, while strengthening relationships with teachers and superintendents to sustain Holocaust education statewide.

Communication and Outreach Committee

Gene Woods was selected as Chair. The committee discussed organizational logistics, including committee meetings, social media management, branding materials, upcoming events, merchandise, media coverage, fundraising, and leadership transition planning. Four subcommittees were reviewed: PR/Awareness, Special Events, Generation of the Shoah, and Interfaith.

PR/Awareness: Social media management was reviewed, with Brianna Doherty maintaining Instagram and Gene Woods and Jess McAuliffe managing Facebook. A social media policy will be developed, and a posting calendar and documentation for acceptable content are in progress. New branded bookmarks and stickers were presented, with updates planned to include the logo and inclusive language. Merchandise options through Access New Jersey were discussed.

Special Events: Upcoming events include NJEA (Nov. 6–7), Kristallnacht with Alex Kor (Nov. 9–12), and the IHRD program at RVCC (Jan. 22).

Generation of the Shoah: A second-generation training is underway with four speakers; Ramapo plans a fall session, and 10–12 candidates will be selected from 30 potential speakers.

Interfaith: Plans for an interfaith panel were discussed.

The committee addressed challenges in media relations, noting that press releases require the Governor’s Office approval. Opportunities to increase coverage through NJEA and other outlets were discussed, as well as improving coordination between Brianna’s office and the PR/PIO office. Connections with Stockton are being explored to support future announcements and communications.

New Business

Hiring New Executive Director: Procedure and Process

Brianna Doherty went over the approved process for the hiring of the new Executive Director of the Commission.

- Search Committee will be formed
- They have until the December meeting to finalize the job description and responsibilities, which will be approved at the December Commission meeting
- Posted will go out on January 2 and be active until February 2, 2026.
- Review of application and interviews will be conducted in February/March, and the committee will propose a candidate to the Commission at the March meeting.
- Anticipated start date, July 1, 2026

Creating Search Committee

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education approved the creation of a search committee. This committee will be responsible for finalizing the job description and requirements, interviewing the candidates, and proposing the selected candidate to the Commission for final approval.

The Chair instructed Brianna Doherty to email members of the Commission to have them express interest in being on the search committee. There will be 4 members from the Commission and 1 from the DOE. If you are interested in being on the search committee, please respond to the email from Brianna Doherty.

Upcoming Commission meeting dates

December 12, 2025

March 13, 2026

June 26, 2026

Adjournment

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education adjourned its September 19, 2025, public meeting at 1:30 p.m.