

Dear Families,

Next week, we are excited to begin teaching a series of lessons regarding the Holocaust. The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that the Germans belonged to a race that was "superior" to all others. They claimed that the Jews belonged to a race that was "inferior" and a threat to the so-called German racial community. During the era of the Holocaust (1933-1945), German authorities also persecuted other groups because of their perceived racial and biological inferiority (Roma ("Gypsies"), people with disabilities, some Slavic people, Soviet prisoners of war and Black people), as well as on political, ideological and behavioral grounds (Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses and gay men).

In Washington State, teaching and learning about the Holocaust is "strongly encouraged: In addition to this study being a reaffirmation to never again permit such occurrences, studying this material is intended to examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance and prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy." (RCW 28A.300.115)

The unit will last _____ and cover the rise of Hitler, the Holocaust, and Liberation. During this unit, students will use literature, informational texts, and video clips to discover and understand the nature and dangers of scapegoating and hate. We will additionally provide them tools, consistent with the Washington Legislature's intent, not only to recognize and define hatred and the dangers of where it can lead when unchecked, but also to combat such hatred.

Due to the sensitive nature of the content, we are making careful choices with what materials we are using. Nevertheless, we are asking that you speak with your student about the importance of maintaining *a respectful attitude* at all times. Although we don't anticipate any immature or disrespectful behavior during this unit, such misbehavior will not be tolerated. Students may also feel some uneasiness about what they are learning. Talking about it at home can help to ease these feelings. If you would like to set up a conference to discuss specifics, or would like further information to help support your student, please contact us. We are truly here to provide a safe, important learning experience and environment for our students and their families.

Sincerely,

(teacher)s' name(s)