

**NEVADA SUBCOMMITTEE FOR HOLOCAUST AND
GENOCIDE EDUCATION**

**Thursday, October 23, 2025
4:00 PM**

Office	Address	City	Meeting
Department of Education	Virtual	Virtual	

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE FINANCIAL LITERACY COUNCIL

MEETING COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

- Elliot Malin (Chair) via videoconference)
- Jolie Brislin
- Michelle Tusan
- Esther Toporek Finder
- Alicia Meier
- Brande Johnson

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

- Amanda Hughes (via videoconference)

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE (via videoconference)

- Mitchell Kalin
- Lenna Hovanessian

1. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. by Elliot Malin, Chair. Quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

There was no public comment

3. APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

Motion to approve by Brande. Second by Alicia. **Motion Carried**

4. INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from August 25, 2025, made by Member Brislin. Seconded by Member Finder.
Motion Carried

5. PRESENTATION BY BRANDE JOHNSON ON THE USHM TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

Summary:

Brande Johnson completed her fellowship with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in July. During her visit, she presented the Nevada Holocaust and Genocide Subcommittee's work, including the upcoming *Holocaust Education Micro-Credential*, which generated significant interest. USHMM leadership was unaware that Nevada is advancing Holocaust education initiatives since the state is not currently listed as having a mandatory Holocaust education requirement.

The museum's Director of Educational Outreach expressed interest in partnering with the Nevada subcommittee to support educational initiatives and expand outreach to Nevada schools. Johnson noted that Nevada had the highest representation of teachers at the most recent Belfer Conference, which impressed museum officials. They were also enthusiastic about the list of Holocaust-related books being distributed to Nevada schools. Johnson will share the USHMM contact information with Amanda Hughes. She also encouraged more Nevada teachers to apply for future fellowship opportunities, as she was the first representative from the state.

Discussion:

- Elliot Malin added that he recently met with USHMM leadership as well and discussed acquiring additional resources on the Armenian Genocide for Nevada educators. He noted that Nevada, despite not having a Holocaust education mandate, performs strongly in Holocaust and genocide education.
- Esther Finder inquired about the USHMM contact person, and Member Johnson confirmed she would provide the name later, as it was noted in her materials at home.

Conclusion:

Elliot Malin congratulated Brande on completing her fellowship and thanked her for sharing the update.

6. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE.

Summary:

Amanda Hughes presented updates on Nevada's *Holocaust and Genocide Education* professional learning offerings. She noted a significant increase in educator engagement since course enrollment was capped at 60 participants per session, compared to over 300 in past cohorts with low interaction. The smaller class size allows for meaningful discussions, increased peer collaboration, and personalized instructor feedback on classroom application and content appropriateness.

Amanda Hughes shared information on current and upcoming offerings, including:

- *Echoes and Reflections* presentation scheduled in Clark County on November 12.
 - *Breaking Down Antisemitism* course with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), currently in progress (participant data pending).
 - Three prior courses provided by the UNLV/Resource Center over the past year.
- She reiterated that while educators from all disciplines are welcome, connecting genocide content to early grades or non-social studies areas (e.g., music) can be challenging.

Discussion:

Elliot Malin emphasized the importance of ensuring all course content aligns with the legal definition of genocide as outlined in the Genocide Convention (Article II) and Nevada statute. He cautioned that certain historical events (e.g., *Trail of Tears*, *Guatemalan Civil War*, *Cambodian atrocities*) may not

technically meet those legal parameters.

Amanda Hughes agreed to review the course list and related survey, noting she will add Rwanda to the offerings and consider removing or revising content on events not legally defined as genocide. She clarified that current focus areas include the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, with an introductory course on teaching genocide underway and an advanced Armenian Genocide study launching in January.

All agreed that future additions should remain consistent with the statutory framework while maintaining educational value.

Conclusion:

Amanda Hughes will adjust the survey and course listings accordingly. The committee acknowledged the improvements in engagement and instructional quality resulting from the smaller cohort model. No further questions were raised.

7. INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A 2 YEAR PLAN

Summary:

Amanda Hughes presented a draft two-year plan and roadmap outlining proposed priorities and initiatives for the Nevada Holocaust and Genocide Education Subcommittee. Members received two documents:

- A “roadmap” summary (concise overview).
- A detailed two-year plan (expanded version with timelines, proposed courses, and collaborative actions).

Amanda Hughes explained that the intent is to provide a clear structure for the subcommittee’s direction, identify focus areas and ensure accountability for implementation. She emphasized the need for a defined plan to prioritize essential work, given the breadth of her responsibilities across K–12 social studies.

Member Discussion & Key Concerns

Elliot Malin acknowledged the usefulness of a two-year plan but cautioned that some items listed may not align with the legal definition of genocide as outlined in the Genocide Convention and Nevada statute.

- He specifically noted that the inclusion of certain events (e.g., *Uyghur persecution*, *Indigenous experiences*, *Guatemalan Civil War*) could present classification issues, as some have not been formally adjudicated as genocide. He urged caution to keep the subcommittee’s official work consistent with statutory parameters.

Amanda Hughes responded that she had included some courses (e.g., “Indigenous Genocides”) because of collaboration with the Office of Indian Education but agreed to consider removing or relocating those references from the main document to avoid conflict with legal scope. She confirmed she would also adjust any other listings (such as Uyghur content) to reflect accuracy and maintain compliance.

Brandee Johnson shared that she serves on the Project Tahoe revamp committee, which is working to modernize the statewide repository of social studies resources for teachers. She noted that teachers often struggle to find reputable, high-quality sources, and Project Tahoe has not undergone a major update in years. She also offered to collaborate with the subcommittee to ensure genocide and Holocaust resources are integrated and accessible through that platform.

Amanda Hughes added that the original “Trunk Project” was designed for similar purposes—providing curated, classroom-ready teaching materials—but the subcommittee lacked capacity to launch it fully. She expressed support for aligning with Project Tahoe’s efforts instead.

Michelle Tusan requested to make a **formal statement for the record** regarding ongoing concerns with equity, transparency, and statutory compliance in the committee’s work. Her remarks are summarized

below with key points preserved for the record.

Michelle Tusan stated that of the \$250,000 allocated for Holocaust and genocide education, very little—if any—has been directed toward developing resources or courses on other genocides, such as Armenian, Bosnian, Rwandan, and Darfur. She noted that until this fall, no courses on these genocides had been offered to Nevada educators. Of the 13 books distributed statewide through the Library project, only three address two of these genocides, leaving major gaps in coverage. She described this as a failure to make the bill “whole”, emphasizing that funding has been disproportionately used for Holocaust-related initiatives. Member Tusan stated that she was unaware until the meeting that the forthcoming micro-credential was focused solely on the Holocaust, not a broader “Genocide Studies” framework as originally implied. She argued that this direction “does not seem in the spirit of the bill”, which calls for equal emphasis on multiple genocides. She recommended either:

- Expanding the micro-credential to include multiple genocides, or
- Creating two micro-credentials—one specific to the Holocaust and another for “Other Genocides.”

Michelle warned that continuing to develop programs that focus exclusively on Holocaust content “feeds the frustration” she and other members have felt since joining the committee.

She acknowledged that the new Advanced Armenian Genocide course is “terrific” in quality but too rigorous for many teachers without introductory preparation. She urged the development of introductory-level courses across all major genocides, not just advanced offerings, to make participation more accessible to educators statewide. Member Tusan expressed concern over a “general lack of transparency” in the subcommittee’s operations, including:

- Long gaps between meetings and frequent quorum failures, which have delayed progress.
- Limited discussion at the committee level about budget allocations and course planning.
- Decisions made outside of formal meetings or in “side conversations” that do not involve all members.
- Agenda items occasionally appear without prior committee discussion or approval.

She stated that these practices have caused some members to disengage or stop attending meetings due to feeling unheard. Member called for a detailed accounting of the \$250,000 previously allocated and asked that her concerns be reflected in the committee’s 2026 report to the Legislature. She recommended that future funding be earmarked specifically to ensure equal coverage and resource development for the Armenian, Bosnian, Rwandan, and Darfur genocides.

She emphasized that any new strategic plan or two-year roadmap should “bake in” an equality measure, guaranteeing proportional attention to all recognized genocides under Nevada statute.

She called for a more systematic approach, greater collaboration, and stronger leadership accountability to “lead us to getting it done.”

Amanda Hughes clarified that there is the intention to create two separate micro credentials – one for Holocaust and one for Genocide studies. She also clarified that resources for introductory classes are being used from GENED (Genocide Education) and UHSMM as they already have the introductory courses available. Communication for the library was documented.

Elliot Malin expressed that the committee continues to revisit the same concerns about resources and funding without clear progress even though a budget breakdown has been provided to the committee. He acknowledged the committee’s persistent challenge in obtaining high-quality, vetted genocide education resources beyond the Holocaust. He emphasized that Nevada’s educators need reputable instructional materials but that such materials are scarce or incomplete for many recognized genocides. Malin stated that he has personally paid out-of-pocket to attend national conferences and visit museums in search of appropriate content. He also reiterated several structural issues. Existing funds have been exhausted; there

is no dedicated position for Holocaust and genocide education within NDE. NDE retains fiscal oversight of prior expenditures, and the committee does not directly control those funds. He stressed that the plan should not just list aspirations but drive concrete action, especially given prior concerns about the committee's workload and slow progress. He acknowledged that member frustrations, including those expressed by Member Tusan, were justified—there has been significant effort to plan but limited tangible follow-through. Additionally, he stated that having a formal two-year plan would help clarify time investment, priorities, and measurable outcomes.

Alicia Meire noted that there is a standards gap: NV World History standards explicitly require the Armenian Genocide. Many teachers also cover at least four major genocides. In absence of ready materials, teachers default to the Holocaust, reinforcing a Eurocentric tilt.

- If courses aren't ready, the committee should publish a vetted references/resources list aligned to NV standards, so teachers have something usable now. "Can we provide references/resources for other genocides? Is that within our scope?"

Note – Standards do not state any specific Genocide

Elliot Malin asked to clarify "Gen Ed" refers to the Genocide Education Project.

Amanda Hughes responded we are working with **Genocide Education Project (San Francisco)** — Roxanne and Kerry Flynn — to approve them as a vendor so NV educators can take their existing courses (instead of NDE writing new ones immediately). We are also working to post direct links to their offerings on the NV Social Studies website as an interim step. Under NDE policy, Amanda cannot email teachers or principals directly; communication must flow through district curriculum directors, which:

- Requires 6 weeks lead time for district distribution and then additional requirements within different districts that also can take up to 6 weeks.
- Amanda often relies on Nathan (local contact) and Brande to reach teachers.
- We do not have a separate Social Studies Facebook/LinkedIn channels; website posting is currently the only broad channel she can utilize. All others go through the NDE channels

Amanda Hughes suggests resource focus shift: To date, most effort has gone to training (Canvas classes) rather than classroom-ready materials. Suggests pivoting the 2-year plan to prioritize:

- Formulated, standards-aligned resource packs (digital/printable) for Armenian, Bosnian, Rwandan, and Darfur units.
- Continue book distribution projects but recognize they are insufficient alone and lesson guides should be included.
- Focus new PD on pedagogy where past pd has focused on content knowledge.

Brande Johnson made a **motion** to move the two-year plan to the next meeting agenda for further discussion and possible approval. **Alicia Meire** seconded the motion. Motion **carried unanimously**.

Next Steps:

- **Amanda Hughes** will revise the draft plan based on feedback, removing or clarifying courses/events that do not meet the Genocide Convention definition.
- Members will review and return specific feedback and proposed adjustments at the next meeting, where a formal vote on adoption will be considered.

8. INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND MEETING DATES

- **Amanda Hughes** will send out a poll for the next meeting because multiple members are not available on the 4th Thursday of January
- 2 Year Plan
- Armenian Genocide resources and courses

9. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

• **Lenna Hovanessian** joined via speakerphone and requested that her remarks be entered into the record. She expressed concern about the use and transparency of the \$250,000 allocation provided over the past two years for Holocaust and genocide education implementation. She specifically requested:

- A detailed, itemized accounting of how the funds were spent.
- A breakdown of expenditures by genocide area (Holocaust, Armenian, and other genocides listed in the enabling statute).
- Clarification on payments and allocations, including references to budget line items such as one listed at \$60,000, which she requested be publicly documented.

Ms. Hovanessian stated that transparency would help rebuild trust and align the committee's work with the intent of the legislation ensuring equitable treatment and instructional focus across all recognized genocides. She emphasized that the spirit of the law requires balance: "to teach the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and other genocides equally and fairly." She called for full public transparency in both retrospective and future fund allocation to honor legislative intent and maintain public accountability.

Michelle Tusan strongly supported Ms. Hovanessian's comments, noting that committee transparency has been a recurring concern. She stated that much discussion appears to occur "on the margins" or inside conversations not visible to the full subcommittee.

Dr. Tusan expressed frustration that important agenda items often appear without prior context or discussion, contributing to a perception of limited transparency.

She urged that all committee-related communication, planning, and decision-making occur within formal meetings and asked that "side conversations" cease except as required to maintain compliance.

Elliot Malin responded that he understood and shared the call for transparency but explained that one on one conversations are sometimes necessary to remain compliant with Open Meeting Law.

Malin clarified that when the committee lacks a quorum, he cannot legally consult multiple members simultaneously outside of a posted meeting.

He stated: "If I am having a conversation with everybody and we are not in an agenda meeting, that violates open meeting law... I don't want to violate the law."

He emphasized that he is not being secretive or "nefarious" and that all budget information previously shared with the subcommittee is consistent with what NDE has provided. It is not on the agenda and therefore cannot be discussed in today's meeting. It has been discussed at previous meetings.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Elliot Malin adjourned the meeting at 5:25