



Empathy at Scale: LEDI in Jacksonville

How immersive Holocaust and human-rights education became embedded in one of Florida's largest school districts — and a blueprint for national expansion.

5,000+

Students experienced LEDI directly through exhibits & programming

16K+

Students reached annually through Duval County curriculum integration

3

Major institutional partners — MOSH, Ritz Theatre & Museum, Duval County Schools

#20

Duval County ranks among the 20 largest school districts in the United States

The Jacksonville Story

LEDI spent two years in Jacksonville — not because it was scheduled to, but because the community wanted it there. Local support, including community funding, kept LEDI rooted in the city and ultimately drove the decision to move the exhibition from its original home at MOSH to the historic Ritz Theatre and Museum, where its message found an even deeper cultural resonance.

Through those two years, LEDI evolved from a visiting exhibit into a living educational initiative embedded in a real school district. Teachers reported unusually high levels of engagement — students were not just learning history, they were grappling with identity, prejudice, empathy, and their own role as *upstanders* in modern society.

Key Institutional Partners

Museum of Science and History (MOSH)

One of Jacksonville's most visited cultural institutions, MOSH provided visibility, credibility, and access to thousands of school groups and families across Northeast Florida — the ideal launch platform for educational integration.

Ritz Theatre and Museum — LaVilla District

Community enthusiasm and local funding support drove LEDI's move from MOSH to the Ritz — located in the historic "Harlem of the South." The transition deepened LEDI's cultural relevance, connecting Holocaust education to broader themes of civil rights, resilience, and human dignity.

Duval County Public Schools

One of Florida's largest districts (100,000+ students, ~200 schools). LEDI became integrated into the district's Holocaust education framework, validating the model as a scalable public-school curriculum tool.

What Students Say After LEDI

"I understand more about prejudice & oppression"

96.6%

"I recognize how art builds empathy between people"

95.2%

"I feel more open to listening to different opinions"

92.4%

"I learned more about the Holocaust here than anywhere before"

86.2%

"I feel more confident being an upstander in my community"

78.6%

Demonstrated Outcomes

- Curriculum integration into Duval County's Holocaust education framework
- Unusually strong classroom discussion around empathy & civic responsibility
- Exhibited portability — LEDI traveled, adapted, and maintained impact
- Students moved from passive history-learning to active moral reflection
- Validated in both science/history museum and cultural humanities contexts
- Foundation for LEDI Online, LEDI in a Box & national expansion

Why Jacksonville — History Made LEDI a Perfect Fit

Just 40 miles south, the 1964 St. Augustine protests were among the most consequential of the Civil Rights era — directly accelerating the Civil Rights Act. Less widely known: Jewish leaders marched alongside Black Americans throughout that struggle. Rabbi Israel Dresner was arrested on the steps of St. Augustine's oldest church; the American Jewish Congress and NAACP stood united in the conviction that dehumanization — whether rooted in race or religion — demands collective resistance. That shared history lives in Jacksonville's LaVilla district — the "*Harlem of the South*" — home to the Ritz Theatre and Museum. Bringing LEDI there was not simply a venue choice. It was a statement: that Holocaust remembrance and the Black American freedom struggle are parallel testimonies to the power of solidarity.

Jacksonville as Blueprint

- Duval County Public Schools is the **20th largest school district in the nation** — validating LEDI's reach at scale
- Jewish and Black communities share deep, intertwined civil rights histories — making Jacksonville uniquely resonant
- LEDI can travel, adapt to new venues, and sustain strong impact metrics across communities
- Holocaust education becomes more powerful when connected to local histories of resistance and dignity