



# NON-TEACHING STAFF: PUBLIC DISTRICT & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

A Books@Work Case Study

**Books@Work** brings professors into the workplace to foster critical thinking, nurture interpersonal connection and strengthen a culture of trust, respect and inclusion through the discussion of great literature.

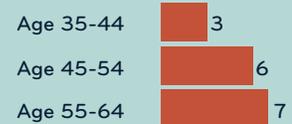
Through a special partnership with **Facing History and Ourselves**, a group of 20 non-teaching staff members from a public school district and an independent school met three times with a college professor to discuss **The Children of Willesden Lane**. The seminar culminated with the opportunity to join students and teachers to see *The Children of Willesden Lane* in performance and to participate in a discussion with the author and performer, Mona Golabek.

## Group Demographics

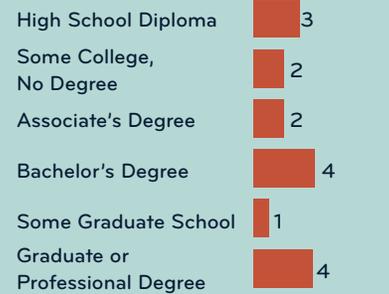
Participants came from a wide range of backgrounds and non-teaching positions in the schools, including

- transportation services
  - maintenance
  - administrative services
  - human resources
  - academic leadership
- All but one were parents of children of various ages.

### Age Ranges



### Education



## Participant Reflections

In one-on-one interviews, participants told us that Books@Work

- **made them feel cared for and invested in.**

"I feel that [Books@Work] was like a perk, because [in this office] especially we don't really get to do too many things. It was a good team-building opportunity for our district."

"It wasn't just one type of person in that class. The people were from all divisions, they just crossed over everything. It was really good to see that. That so many people had an interest in learning about this."

"When I saw the opportunity, I thought, 'What other employer would allow you to read a book? I just thought it was really cool.'"

- **exposed them to the history of the Holocaust.**

"I knew nothing about the Holocaust. This really enlightened me and gave me some knowledge and some history of what things took place during that time. I used to think it was just us African Americans who had been through [hard things], but to learn that there are others who've had their own plights, it was really compelling."

"I used to hear 'the Holocaust' or 'Hitler,' but that was it. I knew nothing about what it really was. . . [Books@Work] opened up my heart to Jews more, because now I can see some of the things they went through. . . I can feel it now."

"I learned stuff I didn't know before. I didn't know much about the Holocaust, because when I went to school they didn't teach all that much where I went. This was an eye-opening experience for me."

- **fostered connections across schools, hierarchies, and functions, and encouraged participants to recognize and respect one another's contributions and perspectives.**

"[One participant] was our bus driver and it was nice to learn about him. He was really into it, took lots of notes and had a lot of good feedback, so that was nice. Normally, [when] we do see him: 'Hey, can you grab our mail?' It was nice to learn more about [him], too."

"You work better with connections. [Books@Work] creates empathy and you end up looking at people different. You don't know what their background is, you don't know what their childhood is, you don't know what their experiences are. When you're talking about a story, that stuff comes out. Then you look at them and say, either 'I had no idea that she had gone through such a horrible time,' or 'I know what's she's talking about.' These kinds of things open things up so they are not 'us and them.'"

## Participant Feedback\*

100% would recommend Books@Work to a friend.

100% thought the experience was worthwhile.

\*In a confidential survey: n=17

"We are learning together. We are sharing together. We are just alike. We all feel the same thing about what these people went through."

"Because you shared something outside, you have a bond. That's why people save people."