

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

RESEARCH INTO STATE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FINAL REPORT

August 30, 2016

*This report contains the evaluation processes, data, and analysis regarding the state of African American History and Culture in K-12 public schools.*

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY OBERG RESEARCH, LLC  
Caren S. Oberg, Principal  
Heidi Kartchner, Senior Researcher



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

It has been important to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) to understand the needs and assumptions of its audiences through evaluation studies. One of these evaluation studies was conducted in 2006. However, the cultural and public arena in the United States has seen many changes since that study was conducted. Due to the changes to the educational and cultural landscape in the past eight years, NMAAHC recognized that a new research study was needed.

This 2015 Study focused on gathering data to give an updated view of the teacher's landscape, both in the classroom and outside of it, in terms of African American history instruction, in order for NMAAHC to best position its educational offerings as and after the Museum opens.

Three research questions framed the Study:

*I. What do intended curricula, that is formal or State directed curricula, indicate about the state of teaching African American history and culture in k-12 public school classrooms?*

*II. What resources are readily available to develop and support African American history and culture enacted curricula?*

*III. What are the needs of teachers and students in terms of visiting NMAAHC or engaging in other object-based learning opportunities?*

## Methodology

### *Collection and Analysis of Intended Curriculum Data [State Standards for Social Studies]*

We identified primary references to African American History found in the intended curriculum for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

### *Collection and Analysis of Enacted Curriculum Data*

We used three data collection methodologies:

- Nationwide Survey—Sample Size: 745 individual teachers completed surveys
- In-depth Interviews—Sample Size: 72 individual teachers completed interviews
- Focus Groups and Long Interviews—Sample Size: 5 focus groups and 7 long interviews, consisting 69 individual teachers.

## Key Findings

The teachers who self-selected to participate in this study are ***practiced communicators of African American history***. They are teachers who discuss their comfort with, passion for, and the importance of topics related to the African American experience in history, based on their confidence in their academic research and worldview, separate from their race or the race of their students.

Practiced communicators are able to dedicate 8-9% of lesson time to African American history during the academic year. These teachers do not necessarily consider African American history lessons to be something that is separate from other lessons. The African American experience is an integral part to all of US History.

Practiced communicators are not uncomfortable with any historic period or topic. If these teachers avoid a teaching a topic, it is likely because their students are not mature enough to learn about the topic or the teachers are unfamiliar with or lacking knowledge about the topic.

## **Recommendations**

### *Intended Curriculum*

During this Study, NMAAHC considered the possibility of producing a national curriculum. Educational standards and curricula vary so much from state to state that it would be very difficult to produce a curriculum that aligns with standards for multiple states.

### *Enacted Curriculum and Resources to Support Student Learning*

Teachers in this study use a wide variety of resources to support their students' learning. They are creative in their approaches to teaching challenging topics, but these teachers may actually present approaches which are not pedagogically sound. NMAAHC can support these teachers by providing resources which acknowledge the expertise of these teachers while also directing them towards more productive pedagogical activities.

Additionally, practiced communicators of African American history have several additional unique needs which NMAAHC can consider and use to build comprehensive educational resources to provide support.

1. They want guidance on helping their students manage and explore their emotional reactions when challenged with these topics.
2. They want access to relevant, helpful, and trusted resources which support the needs of colleagues who want to engage their students in African American history but are not sure how to do so.
3. They want to be supported in fully integrating African American history into their lesson plans, rather than relegating the history as a sidebar.

## INTRODUCTION

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) was created in 2003 by an Act of Congress, establishing it as part of the Smithsonian Institution. Opening September 24, 2016, this new museum (the Smithsonian's 19th) will be the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, art, history, and culture.<sup>1</sup> NMAAHC aspires to use African American history and culture as a lens into what it means to be an American and create opportunities for:

- those that care about African American culture to explore and revel in this history;
- helping all Americans see just how central African American history is for all;
- using African American culture as a means to help all Americans see how their stories, their histories, and their cultures are shaped and informed by international considerations and;
- understanding how the struggle of African Americans has impacted freedom struggles around the world.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, as a 21st century institution, the museum must be a place of collaboration which reaches beyond Washington. Ultimately, the NMAAHC should be a place of meaning, of memory, of reflection, of laughter, and of hope. It should be a beacon that reminds us of what we were; what challenges we still face; and point us towards what we can become.<sup>3</sup> NMAAHC upholds education as the key to personal and societal betterment, aspiring to jumpstart creativity, to generate self-pride and to inspire life-long learning for diverse audiences.<sup>4</sup> As such, it has been important to NMAAHC to understand the needs and assumptions of its audiences through evaluation studies.

## PROJECT HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF 2014-2016 RESEARCH STUDY

One of these evaluation studies was conducted in 2006.<sup>5</sup> During this study, more than 25 educators, administrators, and museum professionals were interviewed. Participants were interviewed about what the future NMAAHC could provide in terms of educational programming and support for teaching African American history and culture in classrooms. It was determined that educators' needs included in-gallery learning (such as field-trips), outreach efforts (such as virtual field trips and virtual collections), and materials that could be accessed on their own time (such as lesson plans and supplemental information). This study also determined areas of study that educators were interested in having more information about, such as women in African American history and historical "untold" stories. This

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<sup>1</sup> [www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/History](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/History). Accessed 1/27/15

<sup>2</sup> [www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/Mission](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/Mission). Accessed 1/27/15

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> [www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/Education](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu/About/Education). Accessed 1/27/15

<sup>5</sup> (2006) Kleinman, S. K-12 Education Initiatives Research: Report on Findings. Haas Center for Public Service, Summer Fellow, Stanford University.

thorough report did an excellent job of summarizing what educators were looking for from the future NMAAHC.

NMAAHC education staff reviewed this report once more in late 2014. While many of the general conclusions held, NMAAHC staff acknowledged that the educational and cultural landscape in which K-12 teachers exist had changed quite significantly in the intervening eight years. State standards were once again changing, from 2006 (which marked the beginning of No Child Left Behind) to 2014 (which saw the end of No Child Left Behind and the almost nationwide acceptance of Common Core State Standards). Additionally, many states now include end-of-year Social Studies and U.S. History exams which are tied to teacher salaries, bonuses and retention<sup>6</sup>. Also, changes in the number of resources freely available to teachers skyrocketed as internet access increased for teachers and their students. Museums and other cultural institutions turned their attention to getting their collections into the hands of teachers and students and increasing the resources available—often for free or low cost. These resources, plus increased use of technology in the classroom, also changed the way teachers in which teachers are able to diversify content into classroom lessons, reaching beyond content and explanations found in textbooks<sup>7</sup>.

In the cultural and public arena, 2008 saw the election of the United States' first black president, and his reelection in 2012. As such, pundits and analysts suggested America had moved into a post-racial era<sup>8</sup>. Such ideals quickly came under scrutiny as national incidents underscored the reality of the challenges still existing in racial America. Incidents in just the past few years—such as the 2014 police shooting in Ferguson, MO, the Black Lives Matter movement, the 2015 racially motivated shooting of nine church parishioners at Charleston South Carolina's historic Emanuel African Methodist church and the subsequent lowering of the Confederate flag at the SC Capitol—brought forth extensive discourse on the realities of life for 21<sup>st</sup> century African Americans. Discourse which is still occurring as the Obama administration reaches an end.

Due to these changes to the educational and cultural landscape in the past eight years, NMAAHC recognized that a new research study was needed.

#### NMAAHC 2016 RESEARCH STUDY

Started in late 2014, this NMAAHC research study (Study) focused on gathering data to give an updated view of the teacher's landscape, both in the classroom and outside of it, in terms of African American history instruction, in order for NMAAHC to best position its educational offerings as and after the Museum opens. The education department has held professional learning events on race and racism for

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<sup>6</sup> Text conversation between authors and Colorado based teacher, April 8, 2016, 9:00 pm

<sup>7</sup> Beyond Textbooks: Coming together to improve education. [https://www.beyondtextbooks.org/What\\_is\\_BT](https://www.beyondtextbooks.org/What_is_BT) Accessed 6/30/2016.

<sup>8</sup> Tesler, M. & Sears, D.O. (2010) Obama's Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. Just one of the thousands of books, articles, blog posts and other writings on the election of Barak Obama and post-racial America.

the past few years, including the recent week long “Let’s Talk!” seminar “Teaching Race in the Classroom” held in July 2016. But, the department needed to know more about the topics and content being taught in the classroom to be able to best position its outreach materials and school visit materials. The research would also serve to connect race and history for NMAAHC’s presentation to teachers, allowing NMAAHC educators even more information and data to best connect history, race, and racism for teachers. Lastly, the research would provide NMAAHC with an understanding of what types of materials teachers need and use in their classroom and why, ensuring the production of meaningful and usable resources.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS for STUDY

Three research questions framed the Study:

#### **I. What do intended curricula, that is formal or State directed curricula, indicate about the state of teaching African American history and culture in k-12 public school classrooms?**

This research question was further framed by the questions below:

- a. What are the state standards?
- b. What is the influence and impact of Common Core on state standards?
- c. What does AAH look like from a specific regional/cultural perspective with in the state standards?
- d. Does it appear that teachers are relying on the same lists and same people repeatedly?
- e. At what level are decisions about teaching African American history made?
- f. When teaching African American history, do teachers primarily consider state level mandates or local level mandates?
- g. Should NMAAHC produce a National Curriculum?

#### **II. What resources are readily available to develop and support African American history and culture enacted curricula?**

This research question was further framed by the questions below:

- a. Is African American history and culture being infused in the classroom even if not in the history standards and examples of this?
- b. Is African American history being infused in the classroom outside of Black History Month and examples of this?
- c. What African American history topics or issues do teachers avoid discussing?
- d. What are the reasons teachers avoid these topics or issues?
- e. What African American history topics or issues do teachers find most comfortable to discuss?
- f. What are the reasons teachers gravitate towards these topics or issues?
- g. How can the NMAAHC assist teachers in approaching avoided topics?



### **III. What are the needs of teachers and students in terms of visiting NMAAHC or engaging in other object-based learning opportunities?**

*This research question was further framed by the questions below:*

- a. What do teachers need pre-visit to support their own experience and topic comfort?
- b. What do teachers want pre-visit to support student learning?
- c. What do teachers want post-visit to support student learning and experiences?
- d. What do teachers want students to do during a visit?
- e. Is there a common baseline of pre-visit knowledge among students?

### **IV. What are the needs of students in terms of visiting NMAAHC?**

This question was originally included in this research study. It was determined, however, that this question would be better answered by this audience once NMAAHC opened to the public in September 2016. As such, this research question was omitted from the Study.

## STUDY DEVELOPMENT

The study began as a small project in which Oberg Research, an audience evaluation and research firm based in Washington, DC and Atlanta, GA, was hired to explore the research questions. Oberg Research analyzed a sample of state social studies standards for references to African American history. To explore the enacted curriculum, Oberg Research determined, broadly, the kinds of educational resources which were already in existence, produce a Teacher Survey Planning document, and Teacher Survey Implementation instructions. NMAAHC would, using internal staff or other resources, conduct the Teacher Survey and use the results to inform practice.

Initial Study findings uncovered more questions and emphasized what we knew but had not extensively considered in the terms of this Study—that engaging with African American history in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a complex undertaking.

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*A sample of the Standards and the original survey was not adequate to capture the complexities and nuances of teaching African American history and culture in classrooms.*

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To gather a more comprehensive and inclusive picture of intended curricula and enacted experiences, the research methods were expanded. In addition to the Teacher Survey, the expansion also included a review of state Social Studies Standards for all 50 states and the District of Columbia and conversations (interviews and focus groups) with as many current social science classroom educators as resources would allow.

## DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES & DATA ANALYSIS

### ***Collection and Analysis of Intended Curriculum Data [State Standards for Social Studies]***

To collect the data on the intended curriculum for each state, we conducted an internet search for the social studies standards from each state. The search parameters included the terms “state name, social studies standards.” Upon finding the state standard, a secondary search was conducted to ensure as much as possible that we had the most recent state standards. As an additional method for finding the social studies standards, we used TeachingHistory.org’s website and search function. Although we could have relied entirely on TeachingHistory.org’s very strong and well organized website, we found that several times the standards listed on TeachingHistory.org did not include all of the content detail listed in the actual Standards. This triangulation (initial finding of standard, double check for most recent

standard, and TeachingHistory.org website) gave us confidence that we had the most recent, most complete standards. We defined “most-recent” as standards used for the 2014-2015 academic year.

We then analyzed the gathered state standards for mentions of primary references relating to African American History. We acknowledge that state standards—what is included, what is excluded, what is presented, when and in what context—is a highly charged political debate. We also acknowledge that there is another policy debate, that our study respondents spoke of, that argues that African American history should be infused throughout American history. Responding to either of these debates is not within the scope of this study.

For this study, we defined “primary” as those references which represent people and events situated in the curriculum to highlight the African American experience within and a part of American history. Examples of primary references include Duke Ellington, the Civil Rights Movement, or Brown v. Board of Education. We decided to exclude what we called “secondary references.” We defined secondary references as topics which represent people and events in which African Americans are impacted, but that impact requires a level of inference. For example, the 3/5ths Compromise within the Constitution is a primary reference while the Constitution as a whole is a secondary reference. Abraham Lincoln is a secondary reference, while the Emancipation Proclamation is a primary reference. However, there were some instances where we included secondary references in our analysis, because the event was so significant for African Americans. For example, we included the broad topics such as ‘Civil War’ and ‘Reconstruction’ (although we excluded less relevant specifics, such as “Civil War battles). Lastly, at times state standards mentioned vague concepts that could apply to many groups of people and not just African Americans (e.g. Examine the ways civil rights were denied to various groups in US History). In these instances, these concepts were excluded unless they gave examples that listed African Americans specifically.

We listed all the primary references we found in spreadsheets. During this process, we noticed that different states talk about the same event in different ways. For example, we found one particular event described as: Nat Turner, Nat Turner’s Insurrection, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, and Nat Turner and his resistance to enslavement. Therefore, in order to make the data uniform for analysis, we imposed a systemized way of talking about each of the terms. The terms we selected to use, the content represented by each term, and the states that mention each term can be found the attached Appendix—State Standards Content List. The appendices also include a chart for each individual state that illustrates the terms mentioned in the standards for each of the grades.

### ***Collection and Analysis of Enacted Curriculum Data***

We used three different, interrelated, research methods to collect data on enacted curricula: a nationwide survey, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The purpose of these methods was to begin to understand, on a nationwide scale, what African American History topics are actually taught in the classroom. Additionally, we wanted to understand the impact of Standards, Black History Month, and other factors on what is taught and why.

We chose to use convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and incentives to gather our data, regardless of the method type. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling are sampling procedures used to collect data from those who are in the best or self-selected position to be able to respond to survey or questions. Both rely on systematic data collection just like traditional or well-known random sampling (e.g. counting every third person) and are rigorous sampling methods. Such sampling allows for data that are more meaningful to the project to be collected in a shorter period. Incentives in the form of Amazon gift cards were offered for survey, interview, and focus group completion at a range of \$10.00 to \$50.00 per participant/respondent depending on the method. It is our philosophy that to provide an incentive is to acknowledge that the participant/respondent is a professional whom we are drawing knowledge from and that their knowledge and their time is worth something. While there is always a chance that an educator might engage in the project “for the money,” we believe that offering a small incentive as we have done ensures we are getting a wider range of educators because we are not relying on the very small group of educators who would be willing to give away their time and knowledge for free. Altruistic participants/respondents produce more skewed data than incentivized participants/respondents because truly altruistic participants/respondents do not accurately represent the population at large. Throughout this study, we will use the terms “participants” and “respondents.” Participants refer to teachers who completed the survey. Respondents refer to all teachers who engaged in the interviews or focus groups.

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*Participants – teachers who completed the survey*

*Respondents – teachers who engaged in short interviews, long interviews, or focus groups.*

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#### *Pre-determined Lists of Historic Periods and Topics*

In all of the methodologies used in this project, the participants were shown a list of historic periods and topics as a basis for responses and discussion. The historic periods generally reflect the chronological order of the Museum and the topics reflect the major points of thematic concentration in the Museum. We intentionally chose to provide the participants and respondents with a list of historic periods and topics rather than asking them open-ended questions about what they teach. Because history is infinite, we felt that open-ended questions about content would yield too much variability to be useful during analysis. Therefore, we chose to base our research on a pre-determined list of historic periods and topics. The quantitative data (surveys) told us *what* historic periods and topics on our list are taught and the qualitative data (interviews and focus groups) told us *why* those historic periods and topics are taught, or not, in classrooms.

## Historic periods and topics

### African American experience in the Colonial Period (~1585-1763)

- Beginning of Africans in America by identifying some of the major ethnic/national groups from which they came
- Forced African migration to the colonies, as indentured servants and as slaves
- Differences in labor needs and crops in colonies influenced development of chattel slavery
- Contrast ideals of the Enlightenment and practice of slavery throughout colonies
- Africans adapted a variety of customs to create foundation of African American identity

### African American experience in the American Revolution and New Nation (1764-1815)

- Paradox of liberty and hardening of institution of slavery
- Relationship of cotton and large scale farming to the solidifying of chattel slavery in the South
- Role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War and their alliances on both sides
- The Constitution and the 3/5ths compromise
- Lives of black Americans in the North to advance their rights and communities

### African American experience in the National Expansion (1815-1860)

- Identify the conditions of enslavement, and explain how slaves adapted and resisted in their daily lives
- Legacies and ideologies of key people in the Abolitionist movement
- Strategies used to preserve slavery in the South
- Slavery as a central issue regarding new states entering the union
- Lives of free blacks in the South to advance their rights and communities

### African American experience in the Civil War and during Reconstruction (1861-1877)

- Emancipation Proclamation
- Describe African American involvement in the Union Army. Including the MA 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment led by Colonel Robert Shaw
- 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution
- Original aims of Reconstruction and denial of those aims
- Organizations developed to advance black rights and communities (e.g. Freedmen's Bureau)

### African American experience in the Rise of Industrial America (1878-1900)

- Rise of the Ku Klux Klan, black codes, vigilante justice and Jim Crow laws
- Varied ideological responses of black communities to violence and segregation
- Participation of African Americans in military (Buffalo Soldiers, Smoked Yankees) in Indian and/or Cuban-Spanish-American War [DC]
- Plessy v Ferguson and impact of "Separate but Equal"

### African American experience in the Progressive Era (1901-1929)

- Great Migration of African Americans from rural South to industrial North/Midwest
- Segregation and discrimination limited opportunities for African Americans
- African Americans create own communities which support social, leisure, and economic advancement
- Creation and role of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Harlem Renaissance and new trends in literature and music, with special attention to the Jazz Age
- African American service in WWI

#### African American experience in the Great Depression & WWII (1930-1945)

- Tuskegee Airmen
- Role of African Americans in war effort (other than Tuskegee Airmen)
- Roosevelt's Black Cabinet and national race policy
- Political movements in the 1930s and 40s as precursors to Civil Rights movement.
- Desegregation of military forces
- Rising segregation among communities in the South

#### African American experience in Post War America (1946-1960)

- Steps towards desegregation
- Proliferation of the Civil Rights movement of African Americans from rural South to the urban North
- *Brown v Board of Education* and impact of school integration
- Death of Emmitt Till
- African American-led struggle for justice

#### African American experience in the Civil Rights Era (1961-1969)

- Legacies and ideologies of key people in the Civil Rights Era
- Black Power and black studies movements
- Impact of 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, Fair Housing Act of 1968
- Transition of Civil Rights Movement from focus on African American equality to focus on elevating poverty
- Associating African Americans with urban based communities, rather than rural

#### African American experience in the Cold War and to the end of Century (1970-2000)

- Describe growing relationship between African Americans and African countries
- Growth of African American middle and upper class
- Lives of African Americans in urban areas to advance their rights and communities
- Tensions between gains in one sphere, e.g. political, and losses in other spheres, e.g. incarceration rates
- Increase of black presence in media, arts, music, universities, government

#### African American experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2001-Present)

- Election of first African American U.S. President
- Impact of African American civil rights movement on gaining civil rights for other communities (e.g. women, LGBT)
- Changing definitions of African American identity as a result of voluntary migration from African countries

## **Quantitative Data Collection**

### ***Nationwide Survey***

The survey was produced on and distributed using Qualtrics, a web based survey software product. The survey included 63 questions encompassing 21 screens (“pages”). Survey participants were recruited through Facebook announcements on NMAAHC’s Facebook page. The survey announcement included a hyperlink to the survey and was announced twice in December 2015, once in January 2016 and once more in February 2016. Survey announcements were clustered during winter vacation and holiday weekends as suggested by NMAAHC’s social media teams who have experienced that teachers have greater availability to complete a lengthy survey during these times.

Early on, we determined an interesting flaw in the survey design. There was a distinct point in the survey in which participants dropped off. This occurred after completion of the third question which asked participants about what historic periods they thought were included in their standards. The next screen contained an open-ended question (this was the fourth question) that asked about ways in which the participant includes African American history in their classrooms outside of Black History Month. The following screen was a series of questions that focused on historic periods and topics taught. To increase the retention rate, we included a new page encouraging participants to continue the survey and then saw an increase in the number of participants moving past the third screen. An interesting pattern in the data suggests that if a participant moved beyond the third screen, they completed the entire survey.

Participants were invited to complete the survey remotely and anonymously. Participants were offered \$10 Amazon gift cards to compensate them for the time spent taking the survey. Only participants who completed the survey received the Amazon gift card.

In total, over 1,200 potential participants clicked the link and began the survey. Of those, a little over 800 were eligible to take the survey. At the start of the survey, to determine eligibility, survey participants were asked the qualifier question: “Do you teach classes that include any lessons about the African American experience in American History?” Participants who answered “no” were excluded from the study. Of the eligible participants, 745 provided usable data on survey questions related to subject standards and 525 provided useable data on topic/sub topic questions.

### ***Survey Participant Characteristics***

This survey was kept as anonymous as possible and therefore there is little information on participants’ characteristics. Participants were asked to provide their state, class grade level, and if the class they refer to in the survey is an elective. There was at least one participant from 45 states and the District of Columbia. Participants represented all grades and approximately 33% teach an elective relating to African American history.

## **Qualitative Data Collection**

To complement the quantitative data collected by the survey, we also wanted to conduct in-depth conversations with teachers to ask them about their teaching practices. We did so using two methods: focus groups and in-depth face-to-face interviews.

### ***In-depth Interviews***

Interviews were conducted with 2015 Annual National Council for Social Studies Conference attendees. Held in New Orleans in November 2015, the Annual Conference draws thousands of social studies educators and leaders for a multi-day conference on educational theory, pedagogy, and networking. NMAAHC purchased an exhibition booth to spread awareness of the Museum's opening in 2016 and provide a space to hold in-depth interviews for this study. Two researchers collected 72 interviews over the two-day conference.

In order to recruit respondents for these interviews, we sent out advertising to the conference participants, in the form of an email blast prior to the conference and an insert in the conference tote bags. The advertisements invited participants to sign up for an interview slot or stop by the booth in the exhibition hall for an interview. A copy of the insert can be found in the appendices attached to this report. Interview respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative data regarding respondents' teaching practices in their classrooms. The interview guide can be found in the appendices attached to this report. Interview respondents were offered a \$20 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time.

Interview questions reflected and enhanced questions asked in the survey, allowing us to add depth to survey findings. The interview experience also provided an opportunity to refine the questions to be used for the focus groups. In particular, we found that when we asked teachers to choose the topic they were most comfortable teaching from a list of 20 topics, they gave responses such as "I teach all of these topics, so I am comfortable teaching all of them." Likewise, when we asked teachers to identify a topic they do not teach or are not comfortable teaching, we were given the same response. While this is likely true, we also realized that we were asking teachers to comment on topics they do not teach which could have been perceived as an opening for disparagement, e.g. "Why don't you teach that? It is very important." Therefore, we refined the questions and asked, "It is likely you touch upon all of these topics one way or another in your classroom and there is never enough time to cover everything you want to cover. Please identify a topic you spend the most/least lesson plan time on." We found that by changing our wording we were able to put teachers more at ease and yield responses that are more constructive.

### ***Interview Respondent Characteristics***

In total, 73 teachers attending the National Council for Social Studies Conference in New Orleans, LA participated in individual 15 minute interviews. Similar to the survey, we chose to keep the interviews as anonymous as possible. Each teacher was asked to provide their state, class grade level, and if the class was an elective. Race/ethnicity were observed. Respondents represented 28 states, all grades and



approximately 12% teach an elective relating to African American history. Of the 73 respondents, 4 were African American. All others were Caucasian.

### ***Focus Groups and Long Interviews***

Multiple focus groups were held in Washington, DC (2), Baltimore, MD, (1) and Atlanta, GA (2). We found that enough teachers in the Washington, DC and Atlanta, GA areas were interested in participating in the focus groups that we were able to hold two in each area and split the teachers by grade level (Elementary/Middle School in one group, High School in the other). In Baltimore, we worked with the Fitzgerald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and in Atlanta, we worked with the Center for Civil and Human Rights. Both museums were asked to recruit K-12 public school classroom teachers for the focus groups using the recruitment text we provided. All focus groups were held between March-April 2016.

Focus groups were two hours in length from start to finish. Respondents received a \$50 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for their time. Respondents also received a small parking allowance (up to \$10) as free parking was unavailable. Focus groups were facilitated by Oberg Research. The focus group discussion guide can be found in the appendices attached to this report.

After reviewing data from the interviews and the nationwide survey, we found that there were states where we had not a single data point, including a swath of the country which included Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana and, in the southwest, New Mexico.

Initial work with contacts in North Dakota suggested that a traditional in-person focus group in which 10-12 educators come together in one place is not practical in these large area, low population states. We still wanted in-depth discussions with teachers from these States. We switched to a virtual focus group format in which a set of teachers are asked to virtually meet through Google Hangout, and began reaching out to state and local education leadership, History Day leadership, and history Museum leadership to ask for their assistance in reaching out to teachers across Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana and New Mexico. While we had good contact with North Dakota and New Mexico we were unable to set up focus groups for these States and were advised that the teachers in these states do not, as a rule, focus on African American history and culture. Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota representatives did not respond.

Our contact in Idaho, however, was able to send our request out to state teachers. We heard back from nine teachers and we were able to speak with seven teachers. The seven teachers, for several reasons, were not all able to meet at the same time through Google Hangout. Rather, each was interviewed individually. The focus group instrument was used. The average interview length of 35 minutes and respondents received a \$25 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for their time. . All interviews occurred between May 1 and 10, 2016.

### *Focus Group and Long Interview Respondent Characteristics*

In all, 69 respondents engaged with the focus groups or long interviews. Similar to the NCSS interviews, we chose to keep the focus groups and long interviews as anonymous as possible. We asked each teacher for their state, class grade level, and if the class was an elective. We observed their race/ethnicity (except in interviews Idaho teachers, in which we asked for their ethnicity if it was not mentioned during the course of the discussion). All grades were represented. Of the Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Atlanta respondents, eight were Caucasian. All others were African American. Of the Idaho teachers, one was Latino and all others were Caucasian.

## ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS

### *Recruiting social studies k-12 teachers in public schools*

The target audience for this project was K-12 public school teachers who teach at least one lesson on African American history during the school year. To narrow this audience, we sought teachers who taught U.S. history, social studies, civics, government, or other related social studies subjects. We recognized that African American history could be just as easily taught in STEM related courses; however, we choose to narrow to social studies to establish data sets that are more comparable. Participants/respondents were required to be classroom teachers during 2015-2016 school year. We recognize that administrators, coaches, principles, and other leadership have meaningful things to say on this topic, but the context in which these audiences work is different than that of teachers.

All decisions made about target audience were made in an effort to gather a nationwide look at how African American history is presented in the classroom. We know that decisions about topics are made at a variety of levels, from state to city/county, to superintendents, to principals, to teacher leaders, to individual teachers themselves. We also know that students in private, charter, and parochial schools and home schools are presented with this subject matter. As our interest was about what was happening *in the classroom* we elected to focus our limited resources on teachers teaching in a traditional classroom in traditional schools during 2015-2016 school year. As we had spent the first part of the project looking at State Standards, and knowing that private institutions and homeschool programs do not necessarily need to follow State Standards in the way that public schools are required to do, we further narrowed our variables focus only on public schools.

### *Accounting for race, ethnicity and identity of participants, respondents, and their students*

It is a given that race, ethnicity, and identity of teachers and students are inherently a part of this study. We chose not to make the assumption that teachers who identified as African American on a census document or “looked” African American would automatically be interested in and comfortable with teaching African American topics. We also chose not to make the assumption that teachers who identified as other races, such as Caucasian or Hispanic on a census document or “looked” Caucasian or Hispanic would automatically be disinterested in or uncomfortable with teaching African American topics. To make assumptions in either of these cases is to assume that participants and respondents are severely limited in their ability to consider, study, sympathize, or empathize with a world outside their own cultural upbringing. With this in mind, we chose to record race in qualitative data collection, but not in quantitative data collection.

Why this distinction? During interviews and focus groups, we could build a rapport with teachers which invited teachers to discuss issues of race and ethnicity should they choose. Qualitative methods allow for the nuances in race and identity to be discussed in a way which is impossible in quantitative methods. These methods also allowed teachers to understand that it was not in this study to determine relationships between race and what is taught. Our quantitative data method did not include a check box concerning race of the teachers or of the students. We felt that by adding in boxes in which teachers were required to identify race of themselves or students would skew the data because teachers would

inflate their responses based on what they wished they did with African American history in their classrooms if they felt the analysts might be trying to make conclusions about the relationship between race and what or how much is taught. Which, in fact, we were consciously attempting to prevent.

Yet, it is difficult to ignore the question “Are there differences between African American teacher responses and those of White teachers?” We read and reread the interview and focus group data with this question in mind. What we found was surprising to us: Teachers discuss their comfort and passion for topics, and the importance of African American experience in history, based on their confidence in their academic research and worldview, separate from their race or the race of their students.

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*Practiced communicators of African American history: Teachers who discuss their comfort with, passion for, and the importance of topics related to the African American experience in history, based on their confidence in their academic research and worldview, separate from their race or the race of their students.*

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This will be explored further on in this report, but this is an important note in how we discuss the teachers involved in this study. The teachers who self-selected to participate in this study are **practiced communicators of African American history**. White teachers among this group may share that they are aware of teaching another’s history and culture and want to make sure they are doing it in a respectful way, but this not to be taken as a sign of discomfort.

**We believe this may be the first study that considers teachers in this way.**

What does this mean for the generalizability of this study? Study findings and results discussed here forth are generalizable to those that are practiced communicators of African American history. The data collected here reflects how this group uses the State Standards, what they bring to the enacted curriculum, and what they want and hope for from NMAAHC.

Many participating teachers referred to colleagues who want to discuss African American history more fully but are not sure how to start. We call these teachers **novice communicators of African American history**. Although this audience is not represented in this Study, we have insight into how to reach this audience for a Study supplement (see discussion for supplement on page 55).

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*Novice communicators of African American history: Teachers who want to discuss African American history more fully, but are not sure how to start.*

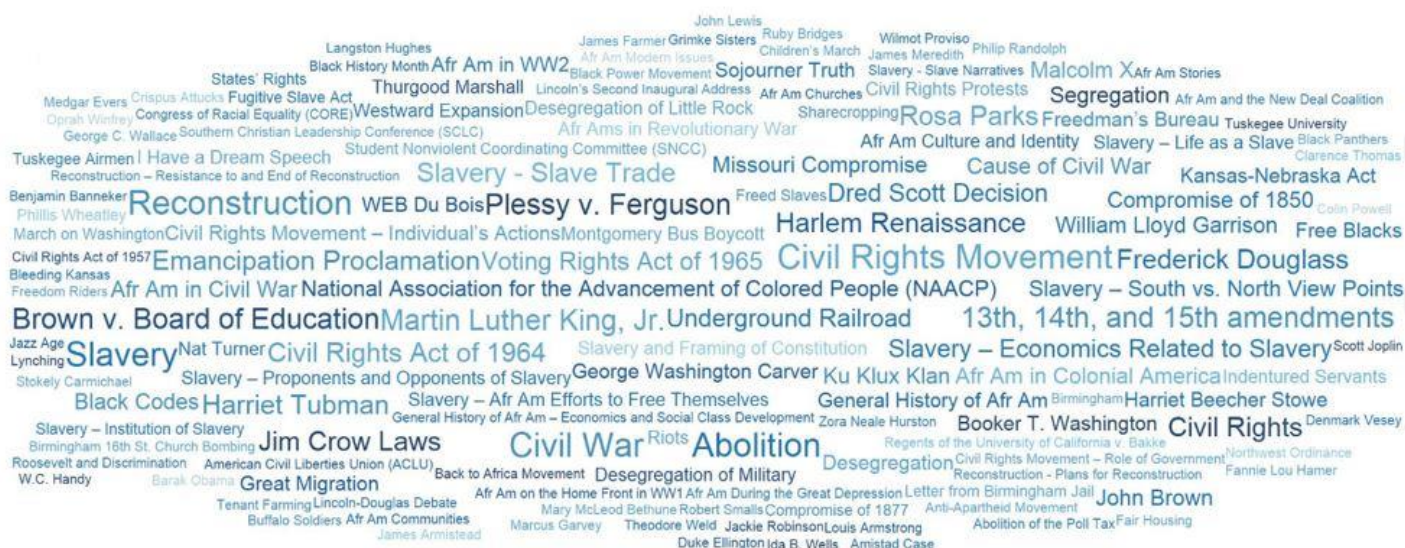
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## INTENDED CURRICULUM - STATE STANDARDS

In order to determine intended curriculum, we conducted an extensive scan of the Social Studies standards for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As we reviewed these we noted each time that the standards mentioned a person, event, or concept related to American History. Only primary references were included (a discussion of what is considered a reference can be found on page 11).

course of this scan, we found that the state standards are as idiosyncratic as the states they represent. The standards in some states—Washington, DC is a prime example—are heavily structured around lists of people, places, ideas, and events, comprehensively covering African American history and culture at a national and local level. Other states—Maine is a prime example—use the Common Core standards and emphasize skill based learning over lists of any historic content, African American or otherwise. As of 2015<sup>9</sup>, only four states (Alaska, Texas, Virginia, and Nebraska) had not adapted Common Core standards in some way, although several States initially adopted Common Core and then later decided to implement state designed common core, inspired by national Common Core (e.g. Indiana and North Carolina). These extremes show the ways that Common Core has been integrated into each state. The integration of Common Core has not been consistent across all states.

ing word cloud illustrates the primary references that appear in any state standards for each  
n time periods. A more detailed explanation of each of the primary references (including the  
uage that appears in each state standard) can be found in attached Appendix — State  
Content List.



<sup>9</sup> Academic Benchmarks. *Common Core State Standards Adoption Map*. <http://academicbenchmarks.com/common-core-state-adoption-map/> Accessed April 2016.

Historical Period	Primary References Included in in Historical Period, in 2+ state standards		
Colonial Period 1585-1763	Era	Topic	
	CP	Slavery - Slave Trade	22
		Afr Am in Colonial America	17
		Indentured Servants	11
American Revolution and New Nation 1764-1815	Era	Topic	
	AR	Slavery and Framing of Constitution	11
		Afr Ams in Revolutionary War	9
		Phillis Wheatley	7
		Northwest Ordinance	6
		Crispus Attucks	2
		James Armistead	2
National Expansion 1816-1860	Era	Topic	
	NE	Slavery	41
		Abolition	36
		Frederick Douglass	23
		Dred Scott Decision	21
		Slavery – Economics Related to Slavery	21
		Underground Railroad	20
		Slavery – South vs. North View Points	18
		Compromise of 1850	16
		John Brown	16
		Missouri Compromise	15
		William Lloyd Garrison	15
		Free Blacks	14
		Harriet Beecher Stowe	14
		Sojourner Truth	14
		Kansas-Nebraska Act	13
		Slavery – Afr Am Efforts to Free Themselves	11
		Slavery – Life as a Slave	11
		Westward Expansion	11
		Nat Turner	10
		Slavery – Proponents and Opponents of Slavery	9
		Slavery – Institution of Slavery	8
		Fugitive Slave Act	7
		States’ Rights	7
		Benjamin Banneker	4
		Lincoln-Douglas Debate	4
		Bleeding Kansas	3
		Denmark Vesey	3
		Slavery - Slave Narratives	3
		Amistad Case	2
		Grimke Sisters	2
		Theodore Weld	2
		Wilmot Proviso	2

Civil War and Reconstruction 1861-1877	<b>Era</b>	<b>Topic</b>		
	<b>CWR</b>	Civil War	40	
		Reconstruction	38	
		13th, 14th, and 15th amendments	27	
		Emancipation Proclamation	26	
		Harriet Tubman	23	
		Afr Am in Civil War	18	
		Cause of Civil War	18	
		Ku Klux Klan	18	
		Black Codes	16	
		Freedman's Bureau	13	
		Compromise of 1877	8	
		Sharecropping	8	
		Freed Slaves	7	
		Reconstruction - Plans for Reconstruction	6	
		Buffalo Soldiers	5	
		Reconstruction – Resistance to and End of Recons..	4	
		Tenant Farming	4	
		Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address	2	
		Robert Smalls	2	
Rise of Industrial America 1878-1900		<b>Era</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
	<b>RISE</b>	Plessy v. Ferguson	28	
		Civil Rights	22	
		Jim Crow Laws	22	
		Segregation	16	
		Booker T. Washington	13	
		Lynching	6	
		Ida B. Wells	5	
		Tuskegee University	4	
		Back to Africa Movement	2	
		Scott Joplin	2	
		W.C. Handy	2	
		Progressive Era 1901-1929	<b>Era</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>PE</b>			Harlem Renaissance	22
	National Association for the Advancement of Color..		16	
	Great Migration		14	
	WEB Du Bois		13	
	George Washington Carver		12	
	Afr Am on the Home Front in WW1		6	
	Jazz Age		6	
	Louis Armstrong		5	
	American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)		3	
	Duke Ellington		3	
	Great Depression and WWII 1930-1945	<b>Era</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
<b>GD</b>		Afr Am in WW2	12	
		Tuskegee Airmen	8	
		Abolition of the Poll Tax	5	
		Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)	5	
		Langston Hughes	5	
		Roosevelt and Discrimination	4	
		Afr Am During the Great Depression	3	
		Afr Am and the New Deal Coalition	3	
		Zora Neale Hurston	3	



Post War Era 1946-1960	<table><tr><th>Era</th><th>Topic</th><th></th></tr><tr><td rowspan="5">POST</td><td>Brown v. Board of Education</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Thurgood Marshall</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>Desegregation of Military</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>Jackie Robinson</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Civil Rights Act of 1957</td><td>3</td></tr></table>	Era	Topic		POST	Brown v. Board of Education	28	Thurgood Marshall	11	Desegregation of Military	9	Jackie Robinson	6	Civil Rights Act of 1957	3																																																																
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Non-specific date range	<b>Era</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
	None	General History of Afr Am	13
		Afr Am Culture and Identity	10
		General History of Afr Am – Economics and Social ..	5
		Afr Am Churches	3
		Afr Am Stories	3
		Afr Am Communities	2
		Black History Month	2

## ENACTED CURRICULUM

One goal of this study was to determine what was actually taught in classrooms (the enacted curriculum). Among these participants/respondents, we found that African American history is being infused in the classroom well beyond Black History Month. In fact, participants indicated that Black History Month is—by a large margin—the least used reason why they teach African American history. Respondents raised eyebrows at the suggestion that African American history would be relegated to Black History Month.

### *Curriculum Decision Making Level*

NMAAHC wanted to know at what level decisions about teaching African American history are made, State Standard, County or Local or classroom. Teachers have a number of factors to consider when planning lesson plans or classes. Among these are the adherence to state, county, and local standards; number of lessons or classes in the academic year; and the topics that appear on standardized testing. In this study, we focused on how mandated standards influence what is taught in the classroom. This would help determine the level at which the decisions about teaching African American history are made.

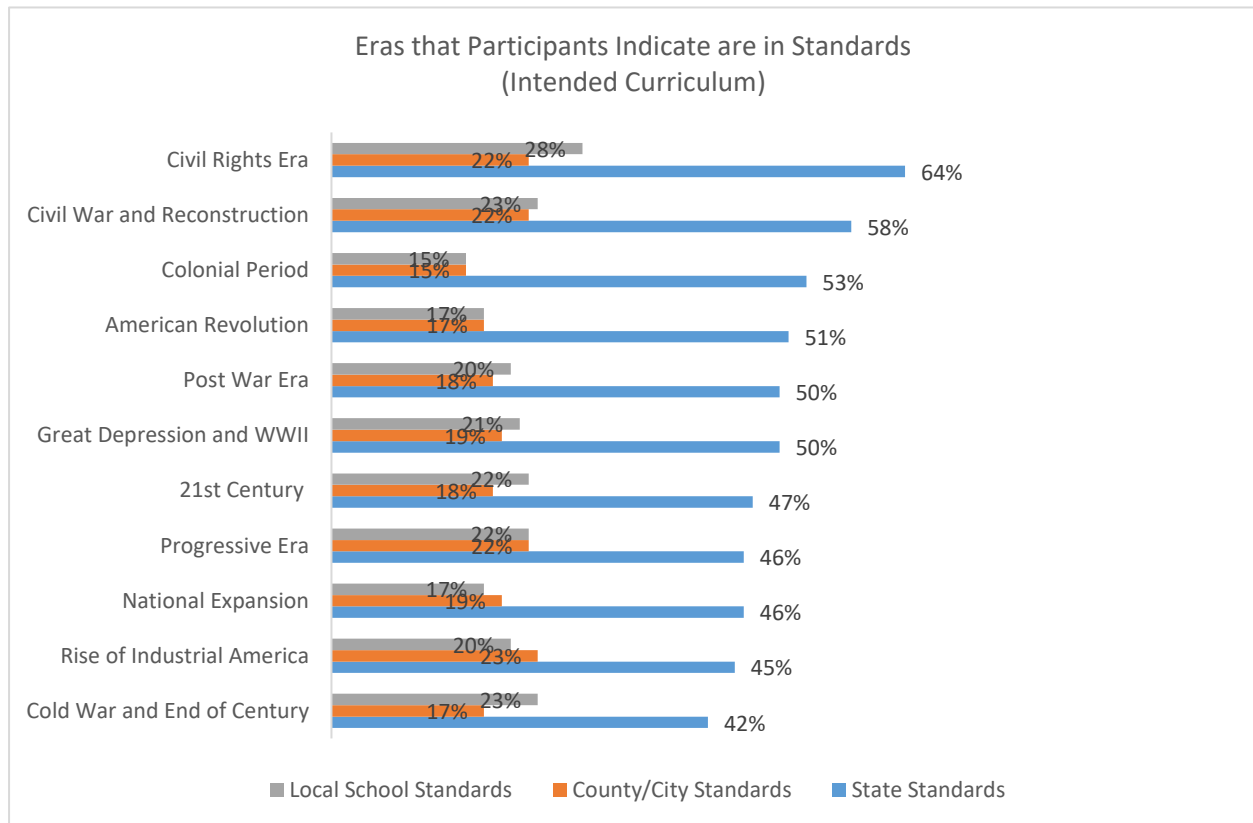
We asked participants to indicate whether the specific historic periods—to their knowledge—appeared in their state, county, or local standards. The chart below (Eras that Participants indicated are in Standards—Intended Curriculum) summarizes the percentage of participants who reported that the eras are included in the various standards. According to the participants, more of the historical periods appear in the state standards than appear in local and county standards.

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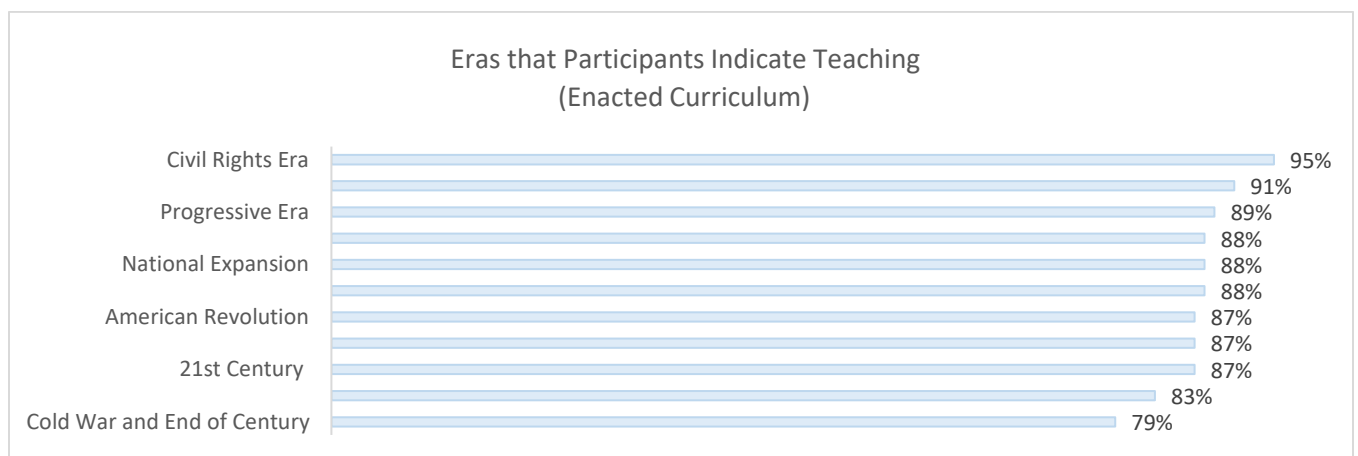
*According to participants, the historical periods appear in State standards more often than local and county standards.*

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To read this chart, say “64% of participants reported that the Civil Rights Era is included in their state standards.”

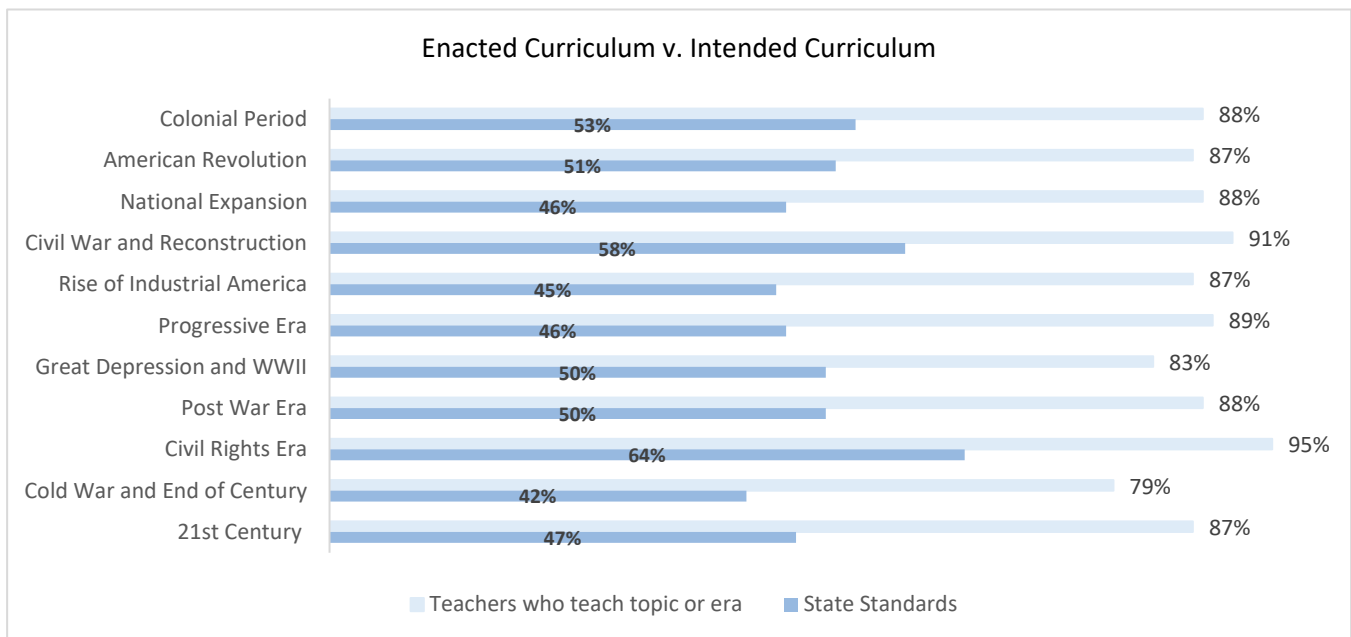


Participants were shown a pre-determined list of topics (which can be seen on pages 13-14) and were asked to indicate the topics they teach in their classrooms. When the topics are sorted by eras, we see that **each era is taught by at least 79% of participants.**



When comparing these data, we see that **participants report teaching topics more than what is required by the standards.** The chart below is a comparison of the Enacted Curriculum (percentage of

participants who indicate they teach each era) and the Intended Curriculum (percentages of the eras that participants believe are included in their state standards).



During the interviews and focus groups, some of the respondents (particularly teachers in states with standardized end of year tests or matriculation tests) were quick to acknowledge that they have very little time to teach topics outside the standards, regardless of the topics. One Atlanta-based teacher explained, *“The state standards obviously are going to dictate what I have to cover and I do. The **exception** [researcher bold] that I have is with my sixth grade students Advanced Content students. We get through curriculum a little bit faster I can back travel a little bit and have the time to take that sidebar and really get into it.”*

Other respondents discussed at length ways in which they are bound by standards yet they find ways to work with, and sometimes around, those boundaries. For example, some respondents reported that they encourage students to do independent projects or present “This Day in African American History” statements during class.

During the last few weeks of school when there’s kind of lull, after testing, to use that as an opportunity to kind of do a little bit more with my African American studies. I start doing a unit called “How Much Progress Has Been Made?” It’s Project Based Learning using Document Based Questions (DBQ). If the student says progress has been made, they have got to go find primary sources to try and support that.

### *Classes or Lessons Devoted to African American History*

In this study, we also wanted to get an idea of the number of classes or lessons that are devoted to African American history. To get to this, participants were presented with each of the historical eras individually. They were then asked to indicate the number of classes where they cover the African American historical experience in that era. Survey participants were provided the following definitions<sup>10</sup>:

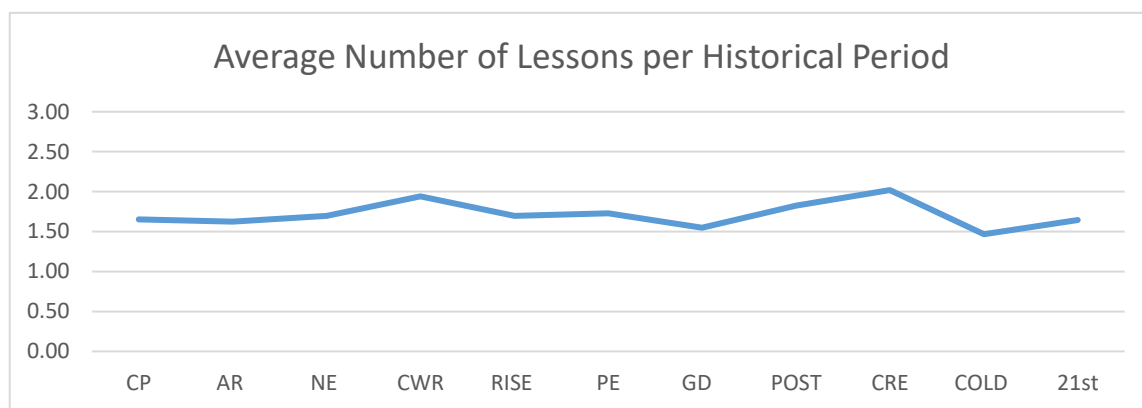
0 = None, not covered (I do not include classes/lessons on the African American historical experience during this time period)

1= Slight coverage (less than one class/lesson on the African American historical experience during this time period)

2 = Moderate coverage (1-3 classes/lessons on the African American historical experience during this time period)

3 = Sustained coverage (more than 3 classes/lessons on the African American historical experience during this time period)

The chart below (Average Number of Lessons per Historical Period) shows the average number of lessons for each topic that participants report teaching.



The **highest average number of lessons are devoted to the Civil Rights Era** (2.02 classes/lessons). The **lowest average number of lessons are devoted to the Cold War Era** (1.47 classes/lessons). This is only a difference of .55 or approximately one half of a lesson.

<sup>10</sup> The 0-3 format and category titles and definitions were inspired by surveys constructed and used by the National Center for Educational Statistics, specifically [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard).

It is generally understood that in US public education, classes/lessons are typically 45-60 minutes long in a school day and that there are 180 school days. It is also well known that schools do not always meet for 180 days and that social studies, in particular, can be pushed aside for math, reading, and other state tested subjects, especially if the state does not have a social studies end-of-year exam. For the purposes of this study, we define a class/lesson as a 45- to 60-minute block of time and 180 of these blocks will be taught over one academic year.

1 class/lesson	= .56% of total classes/lessons
3 classes/lessons	= 1.7% of total classes/lessons
10 <sup>11</sup> classes/lessons	= 5.5% of total classes/lessons

The chart indicates that participants, on average, devote approximately 1 to 2 classes/lessons to teaching African American history, per historical period. Given that participants teach many, if not all, of the historical periods, we can estimate that practiced communicators of African American history are able to dedicate approximately 15-17 lessons per academic year to African American history, or about 8.3% to 9.4% of total classes.

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But...

It should be noted that participants/respondents do not necessarily consider African American history lessons to be something that is separate from other lessons. In roughly 25% of survey comments and in the majority of interview and focus group discussions, teachers stated that African American history was integrated into all history lessons. The majority of these comments are from teachers who teach non-elective classes. A sample of these statements are on the next page.

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<sup>11</sup> 10 classes/lessons – or a two week unit - is included here for scale.

### Integrating African American History

They are embedded throughout. I don't think of them as special to only include 'once in a while'.

I always try to include African Americans as a part of the narrative so that my students can see themselves in the curriculum. I include stories of African Americans and their duties/roles in each era of American history. I include them because we need to remind students that all things African are not solely about Slavery.

I make the topic a part of the American experience/story - not a sidebar.

When looking at a historical era, I cover it through the lens of everyone involved in that era.

I show documentaries, one being *Hidden Colors* and it talks about the different African presence throughout all the different continents. So especially with world history I... so whatever continent we're going in, I'll get to that part and then I'll show them that prior to even teaching it so they know there's an African presence there. Even though you might not see it in this textbook or the basic information that I'm going to test you on. There is an African presence there. And so with my U.S. history class as well – not so much the parts... because there's four different volumes, so volume one focuses on the world, volume two focuses on the U.S. – so they'll see mostly volume two.

**One teacher summed up this perspective by explaining “In nearly every period covered, the narrative contains a discussion of some aspect of African American history. Some periods such as Reconstruction, Antebellum reform movements, and the modern Civil Rights movement contain a greater focus on the Specific African American experience, but the experience of African Americans is always there.”**

### *Lesson Content*

What content is included in these classes/lessons? In order to determine the topics that participants teach in each era, we asked the survey participants to indicate the topics (on the pre-determined list of topics found on pages 13-14) that they include in their classes/lessons. The table below illustrates participant responses.

To read this chart, say “70% of participants indicated that they include *forced African migration* while teaching African American history in the Colonial Period.”

Time Period	Percentage (%) of survey participants who indicated topic is included in classes/lessons																			
Colonial Period 1585-1763	<table> <tr> <th>Era</th><th>Topic</th><th></th></tr> <tr> <td rowspan="5">CP</td><td>Forced African migration</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Chattle slavery</td><td>57</td></tr> <tr> <td>Africa ethnic groups</td><td>45</td></tr> <tr> <td>Enlightment v slavery</td><td>42</td></tr> <tr> <td>African customs to form AfAm identity</td><td>37</td></tr> </table>	Era	Topic		CP	Forced African migration	70	Chattle slavery	57	Africa ethnic groups	45	Enlightment v slavery	42	African customs to form AfAm identity	37					
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## RESOURCES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE/USED BY TEACHERS

Early in this research, we conducted a broad internet search for classroom resources about African American history and culture. As many of our focus group participants would later note, this type of internet search is a rabbit hole of *Alice in Wonderland* proportions. Typing “Teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade African American history” into Google reveals 3.1 *million* hits. “African American historical sites” reveals 3.8 million hits. As such, we set the following parameters to narrow our search:

- a. Conduct broad searches using variations of the following phrases:
  - African American history in grades K-12
  - Black history in grades K-12
  - Teaching African American history in the classroom
  - Teaching uncomfortable topics
  - African American historical sites
- b. Review first two screens of Google results (total of 20 results per search)
- c. Click on results from reputable historical or educational institutions for quick appraisal<sup>12</sup>
- d. Continue broad searches until results showed significant repetition of results

In the end, we reviewed approximately 160 results. Of those results we:

- a. Identified emergent categories or ways to organize the results
- b. Saved 6-8 examples of results which are representative of the emergent pattern
- c. Reported out the emerging categories in the Findings section below

### *Category 1: Prepackaged content and activities*

These websites contain prepackaged content or ready-made activities about African American history which can be shared with students. Examples of these websites include:

Beyond the Bubble: A new generation of history assessments – [Civil Rights Movement in Context](#)  
PBS.org - [African American World](#)  
Scholastic Books – [Celebrate African American Heritage](#)  
Smithsonian Education: Heritage Teaching Resources – [Black History](#)

The information on these sites and their layout will be quite familiar to NMAAHC. These are sites which teachers can use to gather more content information about specific time periods or people in African American history and use or manipulate packaged lesson plans for use with their students. These sites, for the most part, follow the same historical categories as listed in intended curricula, as noted in Beyond the Bubble’s [Civil Rights Movement in Context](#). It is certainly expected that educators would use these sites to round out, enhance, or improve upon information provided in textbooks or as part of commemorating Black History Month.

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<sup>12</sup> Search parameters b and c replicate Google use by educators when searching for classroom resources on line. Researched by Oberg Research for the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access, *LRMI Mid-project Report.2014*

Participants and Respondents submitted their own activities and resources.

### **Elementary School**

In my classroom, we incorporate Theatre Arts and African American culture. This allows the students to briefly get into character of person of choice.

I integrate our social studies curriculum on American historical figures (including multiple African Americans) into many of our class writing projects.

We partner with a local theatre for students to create their own play around the topic of Civil and Human rights.

We read stories about civil rights issues; growing up black during the 50-60's; during AAM my students conduct museum reports of great inventors and scientist of African American decent.

I try to locate African American's living during that time and incorporate them into my lesson. My students like to do research on the list of people I give them. We always talk about various inventions in our stories so I have the students to tell what was invented during that time and who made it, why was it necessary at that time to be made. They enjoy those type of lesson, then I let them become inventors of items for the characters to use in some of the stories we read.

### **Middle School**

Bring in a Historian on African American culture

Students participate in a LDC module which requires that the book Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is read and discussed. The book opens up a discussion on African American Civil Rights which ultimately is tied back into the plight of civil rights for African Americans presently.

I have lesson on African American Education in the South following Civil War and students have to do research on one of the 105 HBCU'S

I have students create a diary of daily experiences in the life of a slave written in the vernacular of the period.

On a very basic level, I try to include "This day in history" activities to start each class. These often will relate to the experiences of African Americans or events relating to African American history and culture.

I have incorporated what the signals were when the Africans needed to escape; how they would write letters to gain freedom; and that they foods they ate to survive compared to what they might have eaten in Africa.

### High School

As we read *The Bluest Eye*, we examine what took place during Civil Rights era and Reconstruction and how it influenced those involved.

In World History II, I give an in depth web quest [web search] on the use of the Triangle Trade as a means to promote mercantilism in the colonies. I use video extensions to discuss the unethical capture of slaves who were misled into false trade arrangements by the Portuguese.

Early in the semester, I conduct a Middle Passage simulation which is designed to be a catalyst for conversation about how anger and tension can be passed down through generations, and how history affects race relations today. This open discussion and analysis of a very emotional topic sets a standard for discussions throughout the year. As a white teacher of mostly black students, my participation in this discussion, and vulnerability in discussing my evolving views on race, is an important way to start the year. It lets students know that we are here to figure this out together - not for me to prescribe one way of thinking.

We read *Everyday Use* by Alice Walker. I drew from my own personal experience and summers spent in the South to bring the story to life. And, I played some of an interview done as an oral history by the Cater G. Woodson school as an oral history project in my grandmother's community.

#### Restorative Circles

We create a timeline of the modern civil rights era. Students also pick an event and create a PowerPoint presentation.

Respondent's resources were similar to those mentioned by survey participants. Interview and focus group respondents described the resources as shown below.

### Additional Resources

NY Slave Burial Project (online)

TCI curriculum

Amistad archive

Selma Civil Rights Museum

Primary sources (e.g. Negro spirituals, slave narratives, historical documents, newspaper wanted slave ads, agricultural legislations of the time, Constitution)

Secondary sources (e.g. dress up as historical figure, videos, *The Story of Us*, *Africans in America*, *Ken Burns Civil War*),

## *Category2 Databases, Studies, and other Resources*

These websites contain indexes and published studies on issues of African American history and culture in the classroom. These websites include:

Ithaca College - [African-American Experience and Issues of Race and Racism in U.S. Schools](#)

[The Journal of African American History](#)

National Center for Education Statistics – [The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History 2006](#)

Participants and Respondents submitted their own resources, including

### **Elementary School**

Virtual field trips, trips to our local museum which contains African artifacts, and activities that involve hands on and writing

We read a variety of books on important Black people/events (Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackie Robinson, underground railroad, etc.). We also take field trips to different cultural events (recently participated in a march for unity with a woman who marched in Selma and went to a street dedication and will be going to a symphony for diversity next month).

Have students research on computers

I help students make real world connections to the African American experience by using information found on discovery education and other educational web sites

I include pictures, articles, and/or items of African American culture and how they have influenced the culture of the United States, etc.

### **Middle School**

I give tours of sites in Detroit and other places in Michigan connected to the Underground Railroad, the Great Migration, the labor movement, Civil Rights, and the Black Power Movement

Guest speakers, primary source documents, National History Day

I allow scholars to bring in artifacts and stories from their families' experience in the diaspora. A majority of my scholars come from a Caribbean background.

I bring photographs of historic places that I took to show my students.

I may have full discussion or have students research beyond the norm. I have also include museum walks of African Americans that pertain to a topic and have students complete perspective pieces

### High School

Primary and secondary sources; literary devices, movie clips

Provided documents and official information, showed videos, historical contributions, and presentations.

Topics are included through primary sources documents, projects, and oral accounts.

ABC-Clio African American History Database, films, and music.

I utilize quotes to contextualize the lesson and use it as generative activity related to previously learn content, real world connections, and historical context.

### *Category3 Teaching philosophy*

These websites contain theory and philosophical debates about what to teach (in terms of African American history), when to teach it, and how to teach it. These articles and websites include discussions about why educators do or do not broach African American topics which are not part of the intended curricula. Examples of these websites and articles include:

Teachinghistory.org – [Web Resources for Controversial Issues](#)

New Republic – [Lessons from Philadelphia's mandatory African American History classes](#).

Teaching Tolerance: A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center – [Do's and Don'ts of Teaching Black History](#)

Controversial Issues in United States History Classrooms: Teachers' Perspectives. PhD dissertation by Cathy Nichols-Cocke, 2013?

These and other articles and websites explore ways in which teachers may become more confident in their presentations of African American history and culture, and why they may shy away from such presentations and the impact on students. These sites are likely to be used by novice communicators of African American history, rather than the expert communicators studied here.

Expert communicators shared a philosophy of integrating African American history into America history lessons and American culture. Examples of this include,

### Elementary School

3rd grade standards are very broad and not time specific aside from colonial times. Therefore, I have a lot of freedom to choose the specific historical figures I emphasize. Personally, I've done a lot of research on the Civil Rights movement so incorporate that into my lessons throughout the year.

I teach in a school that is 99 % African American therefore I look for the African American angle in whatever subject I am teaching. Recently in doing Holidays Around The World I covered watch night on New Year's Eve because it begin when African Americans were watching until midnight when the law abolishing slavery would go into effect.

### **Middle School**

I include local African Americans who can add a personal perspective to the topic being covered.

I incorporate West African history, and African American current events.

I try to teach that Black History is American History and do not relegate it just slavery and civil rights. My students learn about a known or little known Black Great or Black history event weekly.

African American influence in building U.S.

### **High School**

One way I include topics or people related to African American history and culture in my classroom lessons is to explain what life was like during that time period for African Americans and if the current rights enjoyed by Caucasians were extended to African Americans.

The Great Migration is not included in state standards. I teach a mini unit on it including art, music, and poetry analysis from African American artists that speak to the experiences of African Americans during this time.

This is a World History class and we do not directly address US history but I draw parallels between historical events and current events such as the Black Live Matter (connecting it to Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Hobbes). I connect Nelson Mandel and Gandhi to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights movement.

We look at the context of history - including the enfranchised and disenfranchised.

I have an approach to teaching slavery because I personally think that you have to see it, taste it, feel it to understand it. It's not enough to give them facts and figures and sort of an outline. They really have to feel it. So I have a lesson I call "In the Belly of the Ship." There are twenty-four languages spoken in the [school] hallways. The children that, I think, benefit from it the most are not the African American children. It's the other children in the room that walk away like, "I had no idea." The approach is designed for them to feel the lesson. And inevitably, in the instruction afterwards there's always tears, there's always sudden recognition. But it's okay, tears and be okay.

I am making sure that the students know that there was something before slavery happened. A lot of students think that there was slavery, but there were thousands of years before that. They especially like learning about the fact that we actually had money, that we were rich, wealthy. That we were kings.

## LEVEL OF COMFORT IN TEACHING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY TOPICS

Another goal of this study was to determine why teachers would include one topic in their teaching over another, beyond that of State Standards. It was originally assumed that certain topics would not be taught because the educators found them uncomfortable to teach. In this study, we wanted to explore factors might play a role in an educators' preference for teaching one topic over another. We identified seven factors that could influence an educators' preference for teaching one topic over another.

### Factors

I have support of school leadership (School Leadership)

I have parental support to address these issues (Parental Support)

My students are mature enough to address these topics (Student Maturity)

I have academic authority to address these topics (Academic Authority)

I have the cultural authority to address these topics (Cultural Authority)

I am confident in my information about these topics (Confidence in Information)

These topics fall during Black History Month (Black History Month Topic)

The charts below show participants responses by historic period, by percentages.

Era	Academic Authority	Cultural Authority	Confidence in Information
CP	56	53	52
AR	63	51	49
NE	63	54	52
CWR	63	51	55
RISE	65	55	57
PE	60	54	53
GD	65	52	51
COLD	63	55	50
CRE	65	56	56
POST	67	51	52
21st	60	55	51

Era	Student Maturity	School Leadership	Parental Support	Black History Month Topic
CP	49	37	33	12
AR	50	42	32	11
NE	52	39	37	13
CWR	52	44	36	14
RISE	57	42	36	13
PE	53	42	38	16
GD	55	41	38	15
COLD	54	40	38	14
CRE	55	43	39	19
POST	54	44	38	17
21st	53	40	36	15

In terms of Internal Initiatives, Academic Authority is the main reason for teaching a topic with Cultural Authority and Confidence in Information on equal footing about 5-10% below Academic Authority. Student maturity is almost as important as the teachers' own sense of academic and cultural authority. Black History Month is least important in terms of teaching a particular topic, with less than 20% of survey participants selecting it as one of the reasons for teaching a topic. Support of school leadership, support of parents, and the presence of Black History Month have much less influence than might be expected.

Interview and focus group respondents were asked to discuss reasons for teaching specific topics in African American History. The comments below highlight the prominence of confidence in one's academic abilities:

I've had good professional development opportunities that have exposed me to the stories so I feel more confident. (Topic: Civil Rights – Legacies and Ideologies)

I'm kind of a court nerd. I'm familiar with the court materials related to it [Brown v. Board of Education], primary source materials; Brown came and spoke at my college and that is what made me such a court nerd. [Brown's speech] put a human face on it. (Topic: Brown v. Board of Education)

I am confident [because] I have been covering it for a while. It is what I focus on. It is core curriculum. (Topic: Forced African Migration to the Colonies)

Interview and focus group respondents were asked to highlight topics which they tended to spend less time on in lesson planning. When pressed to provide reasons why they spend less time on certain topics the response was usually due to a perceived lack of content knowledge or perceived lack of confidence in the information they currently know. The second most common reason is related to students. Teachers, especially elementary school teachers, noted that certain topics were not taught in their classroom because the children "are too young." Student maturity was never a factor in comments from high school teachers. As a whole, respondents were quick to say that given the right information or with time to conduct research they would be comfortable teaching the topics.

I have not had a lot of experience in teaching it [African American efforts to free themselves from slavery]. I would look forward to learning [about] it and becoming more comfortable. This is another reason to be excited about the Museum opening. I take my class to DC every year. I would not feel uncomfortable teaching it. (Topic: African American efforts to free themselves from slavery)

I haven't done a lot of it studying relating about cotton farming. I am more comfortable teaching about large scale farming because a lot of large scale farming in Colorado. (Topic: Relationship of cotton and large scale farming to the solidifying of chattel slavery in the South)

I don't have any confidence; I don't even remember the details of what was going on there. I have heard of them but I would have to do some reading and research to be able to teach [about] them. (Topic: Tuskegee Airmen)



We found that practiced communicators of African American history are *not* uncomfortable with any topic.

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*Practiced communicators are not uncomfortable with any historic period or topic.*

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They explained that when it came to lesser taught subjects, they “would have to brush up on the topic,” but they are in no way “discomfited” by it. In other words, respondents were able to say that topics which they do not cover, or spend less time on in class, tended to be those about which they do not have information or need to review information. Furthermore, respondents strongly emphasized that should they have the opportunity to learn about a topic they would be comfortable teaching it, should it fit with standards and time. In some cases, respondents cited student maturity as a primary reason for not presenting certain topics. Although this was more apparent with elementary school teachers where violent topics such as lynching would not be age appropriate.

## SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

### *Field Trips to NMAAHC*

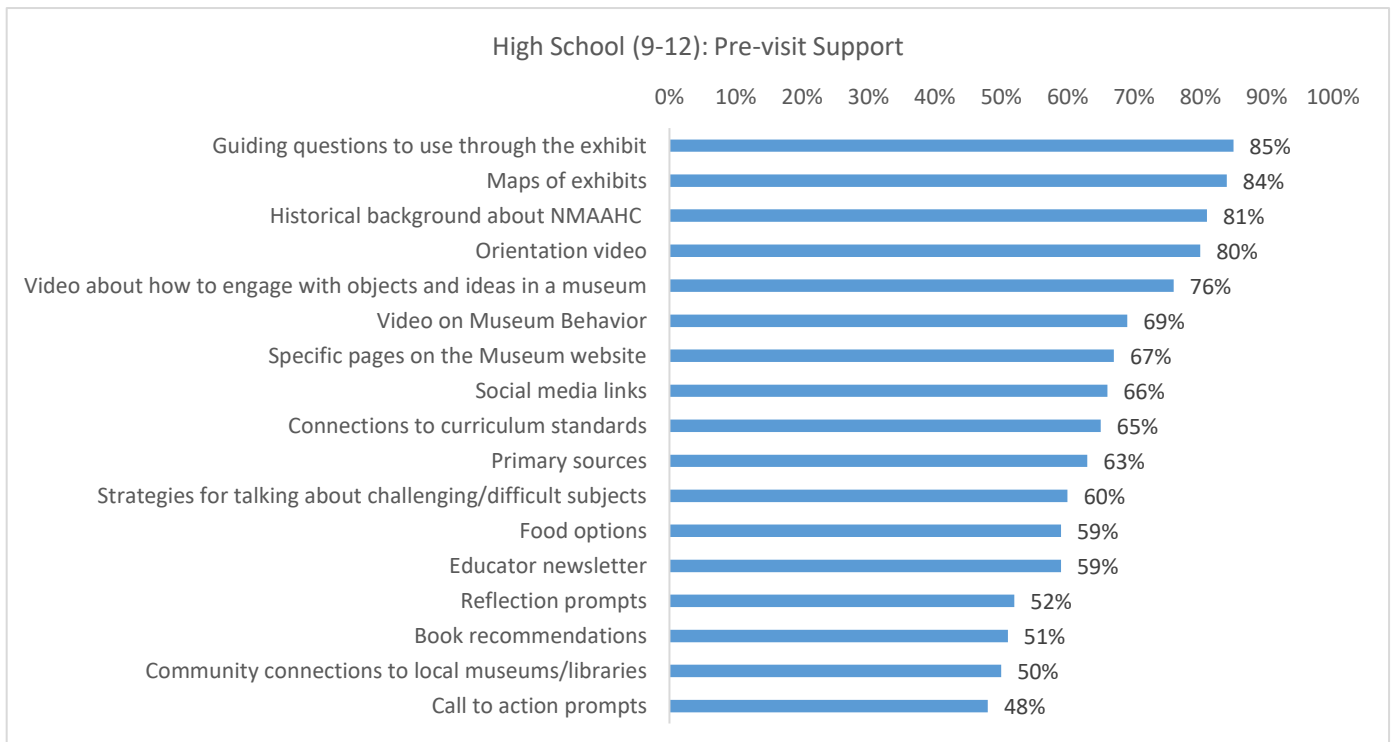
On the surveys, participants were asked how likely it was that they would bring their students to NMAAHC in 2016-2017 or 2017-2018. If participants responded positively (by selecting likely, somewhat likely, or very likely) they were asked to rank student needs for pre-visit, visit, and post-visit educational resources. If participants responded negatively (by selecting somewhat unlikely, unlikely, or very unlikely) they were not asked to rank the resources and instead were directed to the final section of the survey. This distinction allows NMAAHC to focus on producing or refining those resources which will be most needed by teachers whose students will more likely be at the Museum in the next two academic years. As the charts on the following pages show, teachers give highest ranks to (indicating they most wanted) logistics pre-visit, assistance with directing their students' in-visit, and then reflection questions or other opportunities for reflection post-visit.

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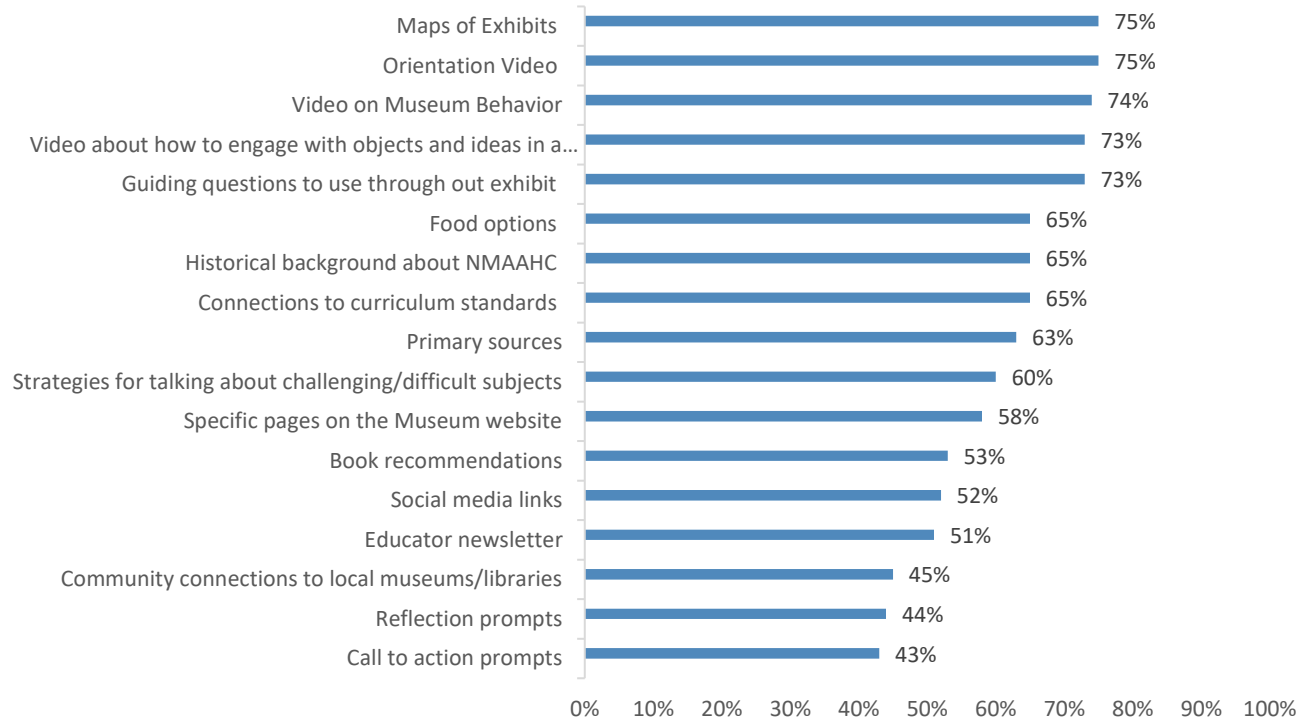
*What is most important to teachers? Logistics pre-visit, assistance with directing their students' in-visit, and reflection questions or other opportunities for reflection post-visit.*

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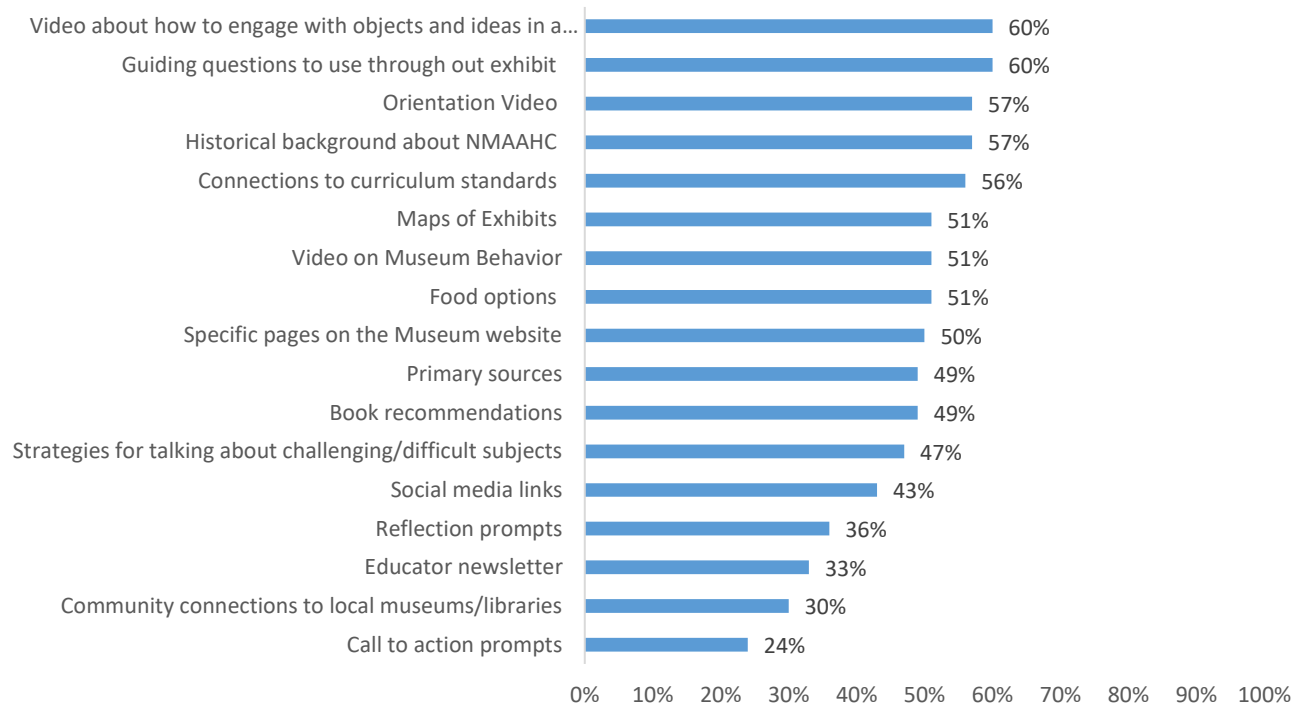
### ***Pre-visit Support Resources***



### Middle School (9-12): Pre-visit Support

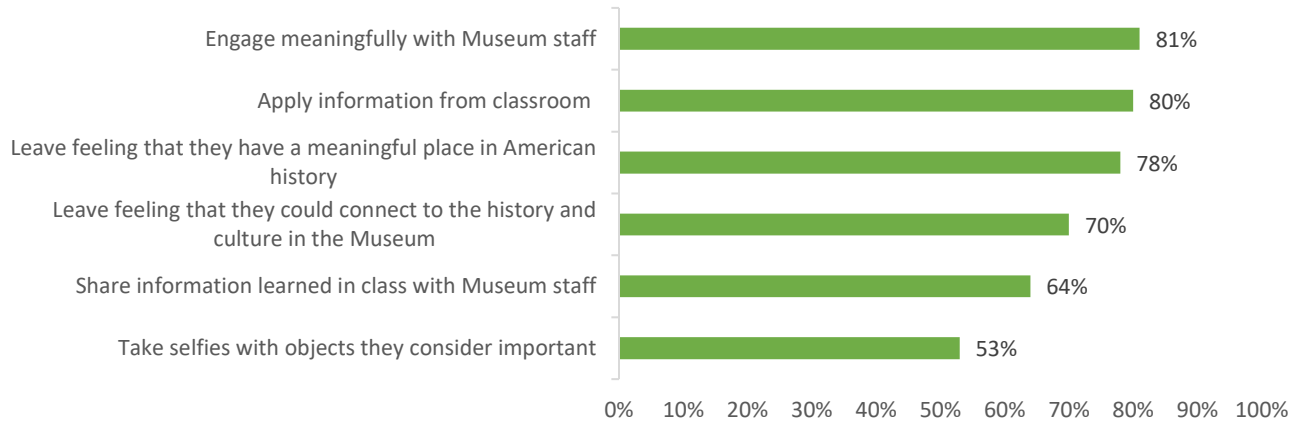


### Elementary School (K-5): Pre-visit Support

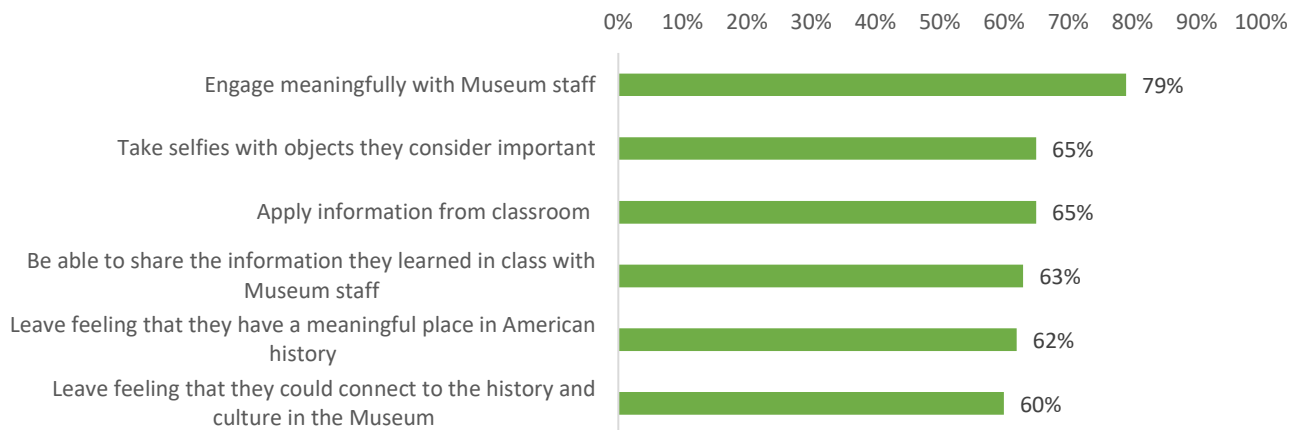


## In-visit Support Resources

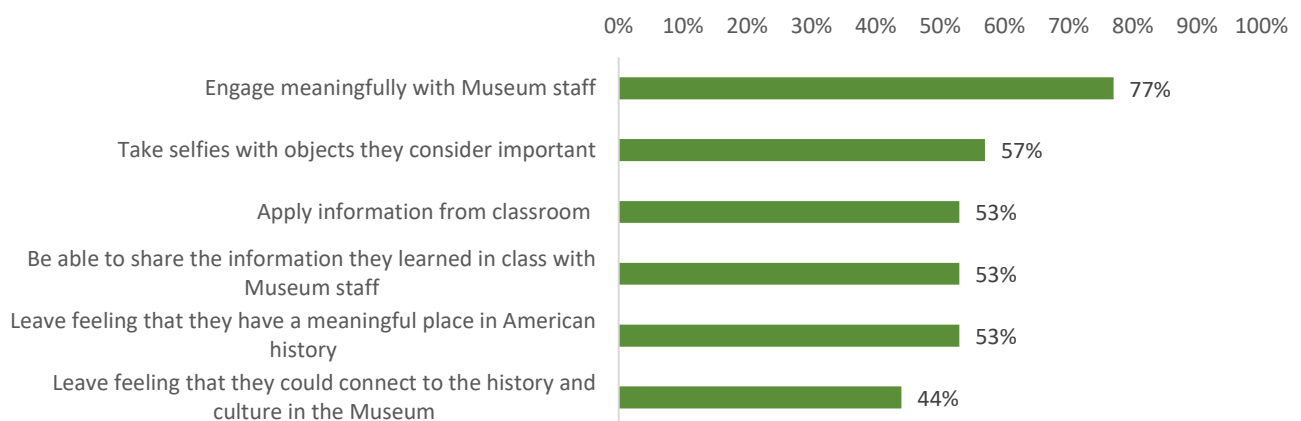
### High School (9-12): In-visit Support



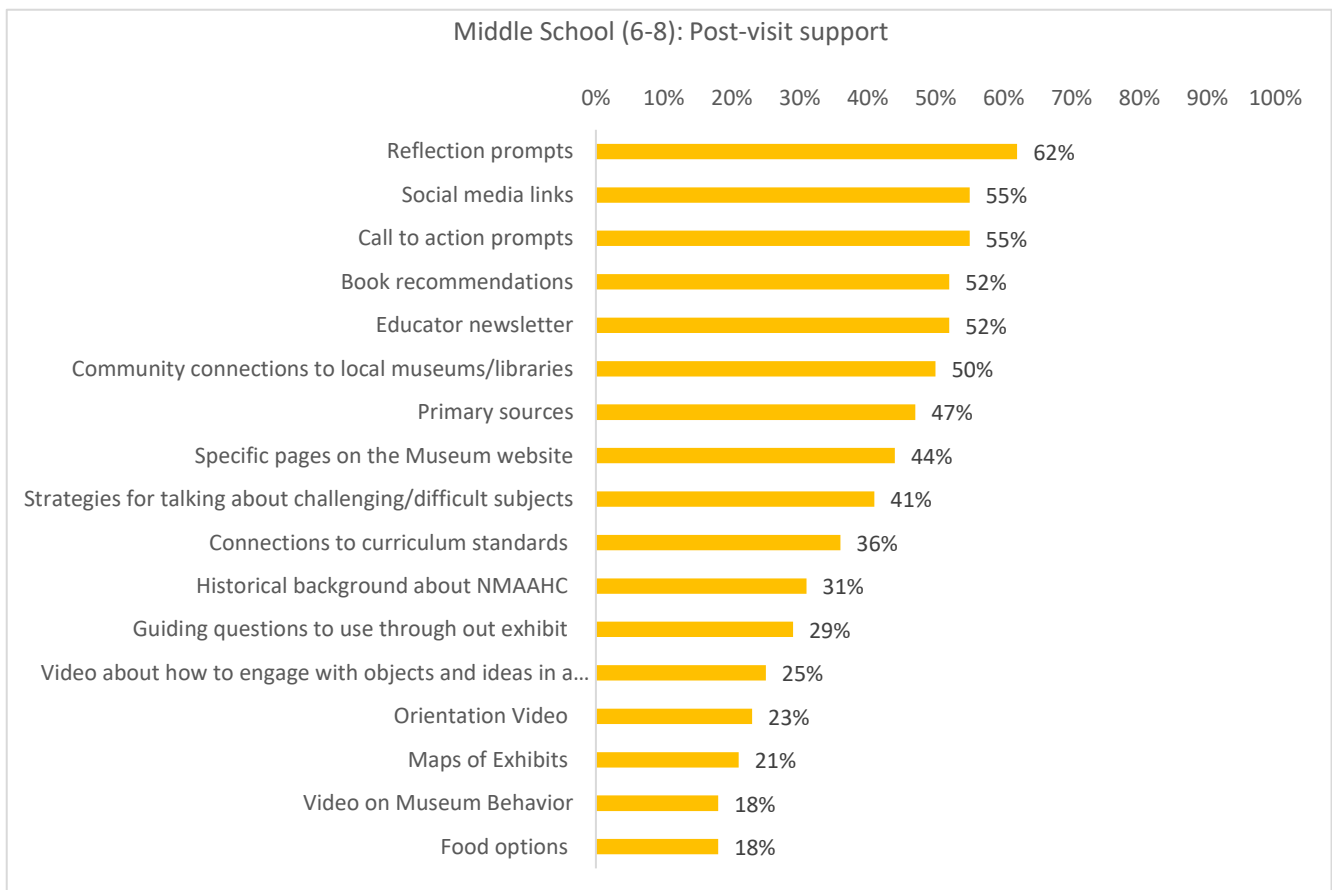
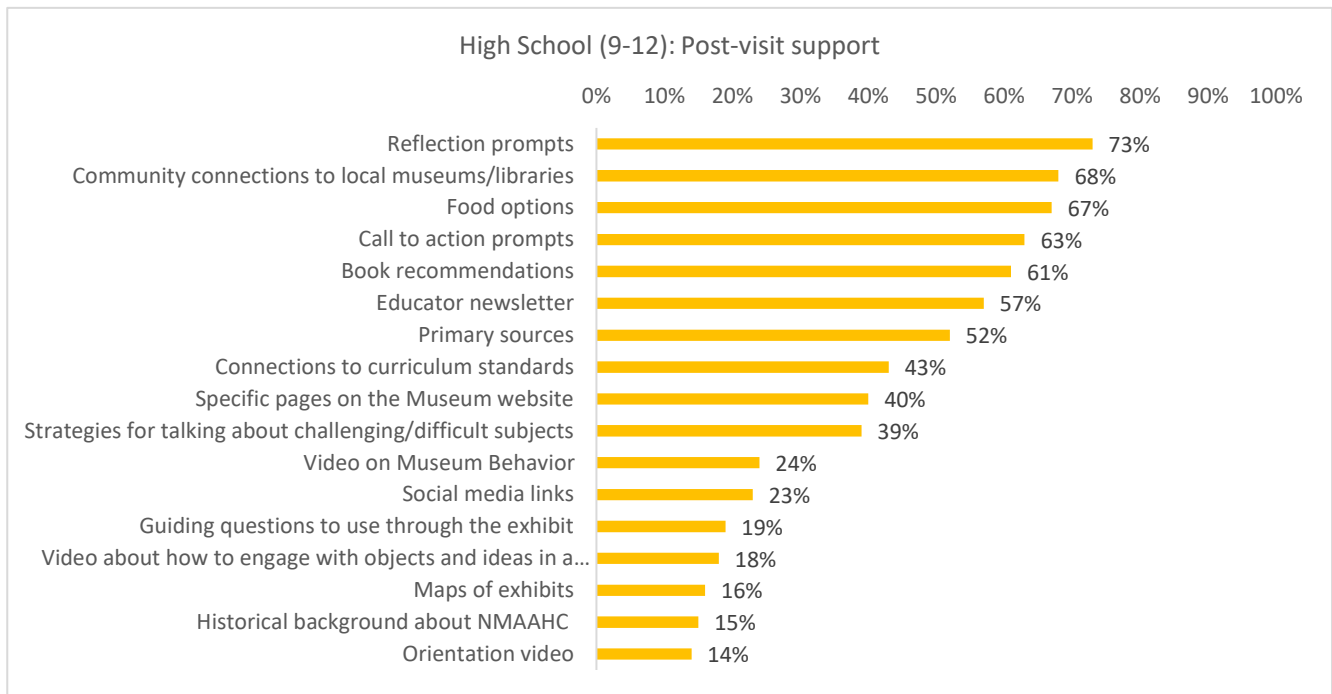
### Middle School (6-8): In-visit Support

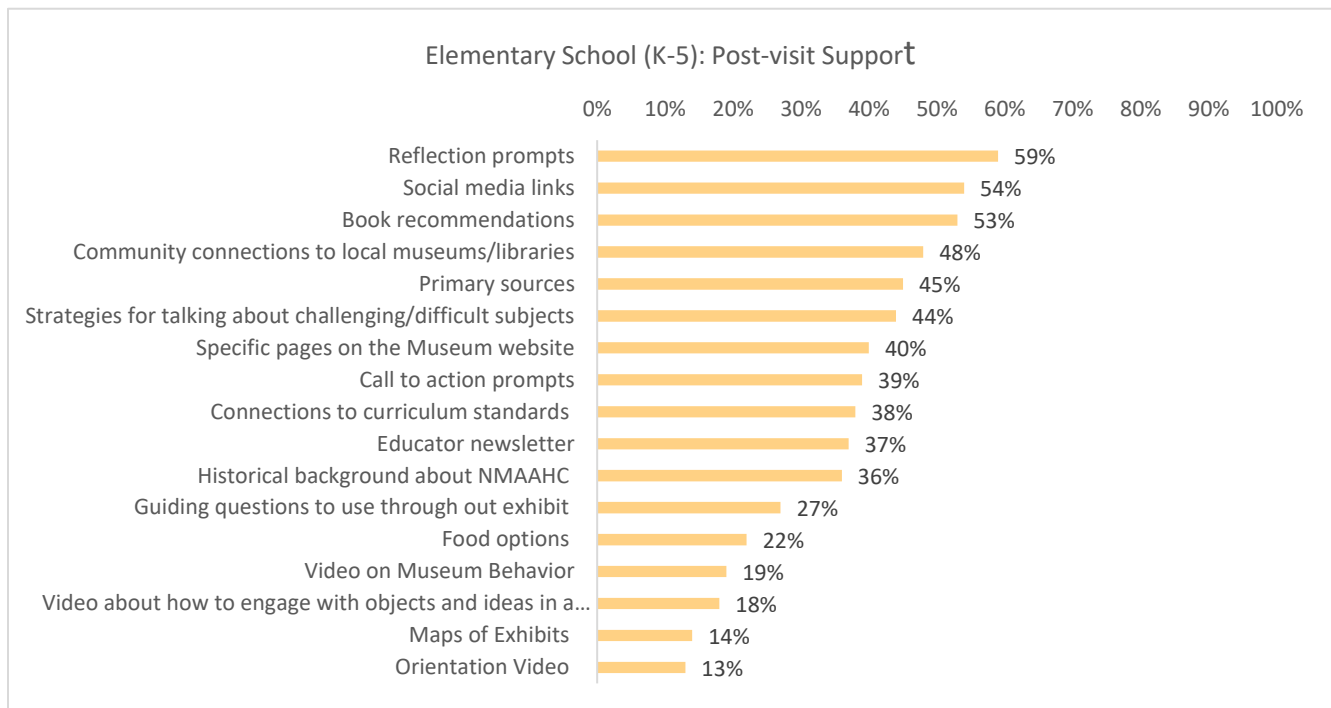


### Elementary School (K-5): In-visit Support



## Post-visit Support Resources





### ***Student Learning in the Museum***

Because teachers in the Washington, DC area were most likely to bring their students to the museum, they were asked during their focus groups how the Museum could support student learning during visits. These respondents discussed approaches to encourage evocative student experiences in the Museum:

#### ***1. Virtual tour to prepare for field trips***

My kindergarteners need to see something repeatedly to feel comfortable about it. I can show the virtual tour so they can see where they're going and what to expect. And they can see if over and over and [once at] the Museum they will learn so much more because I can say "Oh, we saw that! Did you see that? We saw that on the computer."]

There is going to need to be a virtual tour on the Smithsonian website. Teachers are going to say "Okay, this is where we're going to focus most of our time – on the third floor, on this particular place and what we're talking about right now." The structure [building] itself is going to be overwhelming even to the adults.

## 2. Student oriented resource to **encourage critical thinking** in-visit

I'm thinking of an anticipation guide or something that presents a central questions or statements, some that are true and some are not, and ask [students] "So you think that this is true? There might be some point when students stop and [discuss] after the Museum [if or how] their perspective changed.

Can [NMAAHC] think of senses other than sight? You are going to be bombarded with images. But for me, I think one of the best museums in the city is the Holocaust Museum [because] there is something about the smell of those shoes. That is real. If you mention the Holocaust Museum, I immediately go to the smell [of the shoes]. Can you pair [images] with something else?

If something peaks my students' curiosity, their immediate reaction is, "I want to look that up." If they are really interested in something, they'll dig for it. Could the Museum have an app where students can "click to learn more"? I would consider something that's Oregon Trail-based that allows you to be a Freedom Rider, pick your school, pick your age, and then you, basically, are like a Freedom Rider and see what would happen to you. I think that's kind of interesting.

Just looking at pictures is not provoking thought or causing them to critically think. Is there somebody who can tie it together for them? Is there going to be a docent who can explain what my students are viewing so they can start to think critically and encourage students to research something on their own [post-visit]?

I want you [Museum staff] to at least be knowledgeable of what you're standing next to. I have gone to a museum before and [encouraged my students to ask] "Why don't you go up there and ask them?" They ask [the staff/docent], "Well what is this?" And [the staff/docent] have no idea. Then the kids come back to me saying, "Help." If you're going to stand there, I need you be knowledgeable of what you're standing next to. If you're going to lead my kids, lead my kids.

## 3. Museum **facilitated reflection** as a part of workshops

A series [workshops] would be a great way to get the kids engaged in these conversations and then they can bring the conversations back to the classroom. But it has to be structured in a way that they are also given facilitated time to process. A facilitator [would] provide time for students to process and reflect. Because if you just do a series and all this deep stuff comes out, and then [students hear] "Okay, times up. Thank you for coming." The students leave and they don't have anything to do with everything that they've heard, everything they're ingested. The students need to [know] how they can make an impact with the information. They need to be able to answer "What are we going to do with the information next?"

## ***Student Learning Outside the Museum***

Respondents were asked to discuss ways in which NMAAHC could support student learning in the classroom. Their responses support much of what NMAAHC already plans to do, but teacher responses lent further nuance to the potential impact of these resources. Responses fell into several main categories, crossing all grade levels:

### ***1. Primary resources***

The teachers explained that they already use primary sources and that they find them from sources such as the Library of Congress site or other sites. They also explained that finding the most useful and applicable primary source is often time consuming. The participants (misunderstanding that NMAAHC is a collecting institution with its own primary documents to offer) suggested that it would be useful for NMAAHC to find primary sources and distribute them to teachers.

We use a lot of primary resources and secondary resources. I tap into a lot of other programs like Facing Our Histories and Teaching Tolerance. I just taught a lesson on the new Jim Crow. We look at the amendments and I really challenge them to think about what happened in the past and what's currently happening and what's going to potentially happen, analyzing things deeply, beyond what they're hearing in the news and what they're seeing in the textbooks. And sometimes I challenge them and question what they're hearing at home.

I think it would be amazing to have access to slave narratives. Primary source documents that would allow the students to see as close as they can firsthand, what life would have been like for African Americans in servitude or not in servitude during the early parts of America up to and after the Civil War. It is easy for a teacher to talk about it. But I've found it's something entirely different for students if they can read the words of someone that was experiencing firsthand.

### ***2. Trainings for new teachers***

Respondents suggested more trainings are needed for teachers who are novices to teaching African American history in depth. As examples, they discussed various leadership opportunities they have had that benefited their teaching of these topics (including NEH's week long teacher institutes and engagement with the Southern Poverty Law Center). These opportunities provided important ways to improve their own teaching which provided more support and confidence for teaching African American history topics in the classroom. The respondents inferred that they do not need these trainings for themselves. But there are teachers that maybe "should be teaching these topics" or "want to teach these topics" that would benefit from these trainings.



For example, we went to the Women's History Museum which is part of the National Parks Service. They gave us primary sources, they gave us DBQs, and they gave us a lot of information that could be used in the classroom, in general. And I think that it should be the same from the African American history museum.

I think that there need to be ways for workshops to be provided for teachers that are non-threatening but emphasize the importance of addressing these topics and the myriad of others that exist. I think when you're allowed to cherry-pick what you're teaching you're going to go with what you're comfortable with or what you have an understanding of. And so if a teacher goes to a workshop - not a half day where they're exhausted at the end - but they're given takeaways like a lesson you can teach on Reconstruction, Plessy vs. Ferguson, or told "here is a project your students can do on the Great Migration. It is something that they can take that is tangible, that then they can recreate until they are comfortable teaching it themselves.

### **3. Ways to support emotional wellbeing**

Teachers mentioned that they were seeking information and ways for them to support their students' emotional wellbeing during difficult discussions. They hoped to have their students become more empathetic and compassionate about their own and others' histories. Teachers explained how they hoped they could learn ways to support their African American students as they reconcile their anger when hearing about their history while also using the history to support an appreciation for what their distant and recent ancestors did so that they would be where they are today. For their white students, teachers wanted more ways to instill empathy without guilt or to help white students move beyond guilt to more useful emotions which could lead to social action towards all.

The issue that I'm having in teaching U.S. history is that my African American children are so few that they tend to feel conspicuous in the classroom and that makes me uncomfortable for them. So sometimes when you're talking about the Civil Rights Movement, or you're talking about riots and issues of race, you can see them become uncomfortable in that conversation and that makes me feel bad because I think that there has to be a better way to talk about this without having my children feel uncomfortable in that setting.

For the students to have an appreciation of where they come from, who came before you, who suffered, bled, died, went through all of these hardships so that you can be able to have access to this educational opportunity or be able to live in a certain town you live, or to be able to go to a restaurant and get service. To really just start to not only really look at that stuff, but really look at that and really appreciate who came before them.

My kids, who are sophomores, are familiar with [the topics] in terms of they can wrap their minds around the concept, but I wouldn't say they're comfortable learning about it. They're actually pretty comfy with talking in class and they ask a ton of questions. And when we get to topics like, you know, apartheid and segregation and things like that, they get very quiet.

I think there's kind of an inherent uncomfortableness. Not that the kids are racist, but they recognize that this [race relations] is something that we don't have a lot of experience with in this region (northern Idaho). And when we talk about race relations, this isn't something that we have, it's not relevant for them here. So, I think that kind of makes them uncomfortable as well, because they recognize the fact that we're weird in our lack of diversity.

We talk about Jim Crow. I have all African American students, so when I do show something that's upsetting I explain "This stuff really did happen and we need to talk about it." Because sometimes it does get graphic and intense and shocking. And I suggest going to get a glass of water and walk down the hall or something. But it can get very intense so they'll say sometimes, "What are you showing us this for?"

**4. Outreach directly from or supported by NMAAHC:** Participants expressed an interest in outreach to classrooms such as a thematic virtual tour of the Museum or a way to connect with NMAAHC curators and staff and open opportunities up for all students, not just those who "behave." Unlike the virtual tours mentioned when discussing pre-visit needs, which would be a visit orientation tour, these virtual tours would be content or theme driven. It would discuss objects and could fold in document based questions and other opportunities for critical thinking. Connections to NMAAHC staff include such items as engaging directly with staff via Skype and other live technology. Some of the participants discussed a desire to connect with speakers and visitors from or near their own communities as well as reaching out to communities different from their own.

If you teach in Howard County, [MD] it is very difficult to get a fieldtrip. If you could develop some type of outreach team, where you visit school and actually bring some artifacts. I know that one time we had a PD and [the speaker] was connected to the African American newspaper and he brought in all this actual stuff from when the newspaper was founded.

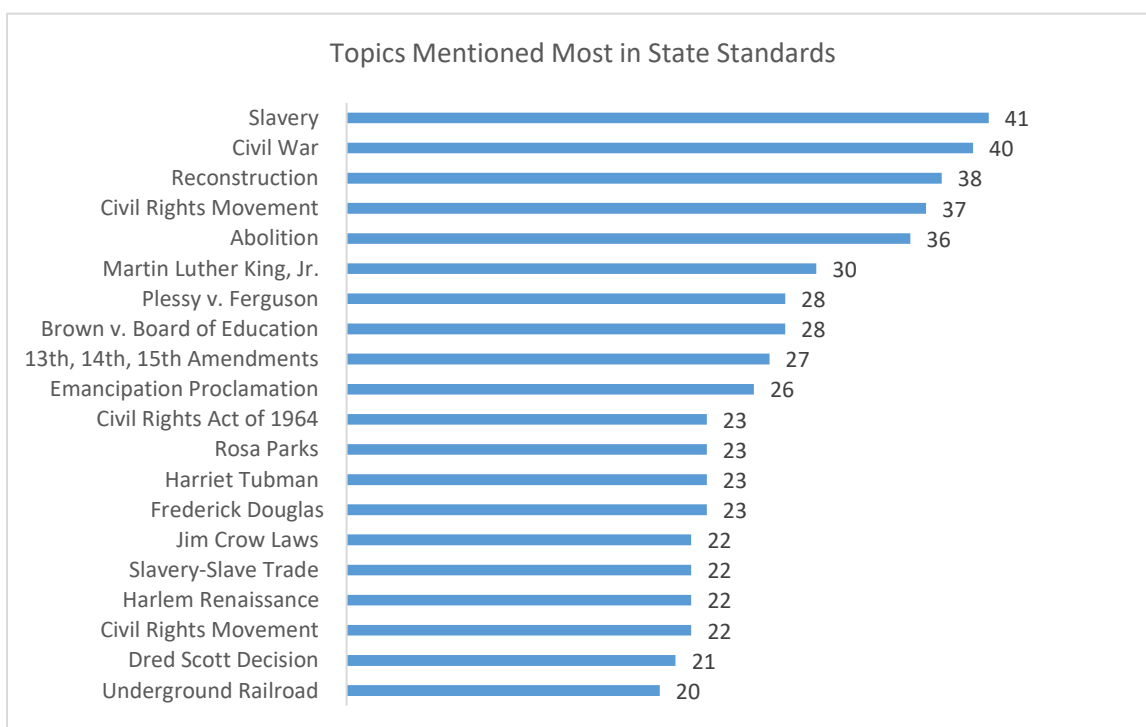
It is the same pocket of students who get the opportunities. We always have the field trip list and you always see most of the same names on the list. They're the ones that no one minds taking on the trip, no one minds giving them these opportunities. It is not that other don't, it's just that when they become the problems. The school is going to give certain kids that may have been the problem child opportunities to experience things and go out and things like that, but then they misbehave [in school] and the principal takes those kids off the bus. For example, we were supposed to have three busloads of kids, for a field trip, and it was me and twenty kids. *But I can have my whole entire class sit and do a Skype with someone. (Researcher italics)*

I wish that humans weren't like this, but the way humans are is that they're racist until they have a Black friend or they're homophobic until they have a gay friend. I find that people who are kind of in that culture, less progressive and more oppressive, that once they experience something different it's like it opens up a whole new world of empathy for them. I would love for my students in Idaho to have some sort of connection with a class that has a more diverse population.

# C onclusion

## ***Intended Curriculum***

It was the hope that a review of the State Standards would provide a pattern within the intended curriculum which NMAAHC could then use as a guide to develop resources for topics or concepts “missing” from the Standards. Perhaps even a national curriculum. And there were several major topics and names appear in many of the states. The table below show the topics that appear in more than 20 states. When considering these data, please remember that not all states list detailed content in their standards.



But the Standards word cloud, repeated on the following page, while revealing several broad historical markers, is a complex web of hundreds of events, concepts, people and ideas, the majority of which are covered by a state here and a state there. The Standards can tell NMAAHC the very broad historical progression being followed, but beyond that, it is a state by state decision.



lessons at just about 10% of total history or social studies lessons annually. It is likely that NMAAHC would want to see this number increase.

This study also explored why teachers would include one topic in their teaching over another. We found that these teachers did not avoid uncomfortable topics. They were willing to teach any topics, although they were limited by unfamiliar subjects and by their students' maturity. NMAAHC could support these teachers by providing professional development opportunities where teachers could brush up on unfamiliar subjects.

### ***Resources to Support Student Learning***

As noted earlier, the teachers in this study use a wide variety of resources to support their students' learning. They are creative in their approaches to teaching challenging topics. These teachers feel strongly that their students need to be made aware of, appreciate, and have empathy for the African American experience. In their confidence, however, these teachers may actually present approaches which are not pedagogically sound, such as asking a student to recreate a diary entry of the day in the life of a slave (mentioned on page 34) or pack together into the outline of a portion of a slave ship (mentioned on page 38). These types of activities fit remarkably well into Common Core Standards and, as one teacher said, "the approach is designed for them to feel the lesson." Yet these activities may not be as culturally respectful or pedagogically sound. NMAAHC can support these teachers by providing resources which acknowledge the expertise of these teachers while also directing them towards more productive pedagogical activities. The content based lesson plans NMAAHC had first considered before this Study could be refined to combine primary documents, document-based questions, and a suggested, more pedagogical, activity related to the primary documents.

Additionally, practiced communicators of African American history have several additional unique needs which NMAAHC can consider and use to build comprehensive educational resources to provide support.

1. They want guidance on helping their students manage and explore their emotional reactions when challenged with these topics. Educators need concrete examples from NMAAHC about how to help their students resolve emotional responses in order to learn more. NMAAHC can direct its educational resources towards this need, including face-to-face discussions between curators, educators, and other NMAAHC staff and students, via virtual conferencing. Skype and related systems could be used in the immediate future.

2. They want access to relevant, helpful, and trusted resources which support the needs of colleagues who are novice communicators. As noted by the practiced communicators, content material is everywhere. So much so that the novice communicator is likely overwhelmed by the sheer amount and variety. NMAAHC can provide a guiding hand to the novice communicator to select content material which is historically rigorous and accurate. NMAAHC is in a position to provide concrete suggestions for communicating the content, provide a "heads up" as to how their students might react or questions their students might have, and provide concrete suggestions for helping their students. These are

resources which are content driven and strongly support the needs of novice communicators in a way that reassures and encourages the novice.

3. They want to be able to fully integrate African American history into their lesson plans, rather than relegating the history as a sidebar. NMAAHC is in a position to provide these teachers with opportunities to discuss how this might be accomplished, such as meeting groups and other live (in person or virtual) exchanges of ideas.

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, when considering all of the data and findings and analysis, and the deep discussions we have had with NMAAHC over the course of the study, we see that African American history is being taught by practiced communicators and there are novice communicators who want to share this history with their students. We see that NMAAHC is in a position to support teachers to inspire students to work with emotional content which is complex and multifaceted, to understand it and be encouraged to explore further. NMAAHC's educational reach is going to be more than one teacher at a time. They can reach and influence an entire field.

## **S**tudy replication in 2020 and beyond

The study discussed in this report can be considered a baseline study of the state of how practiced communicators teach African American history in K-12 public school classrooms. It has always been a goal of this study to be able to replicate it at 5 year intervals and be able to compare findings from study to study. However, education policy and personal change occur slowly. Therefore, before one sets out to replicate the study, we suggest examining *if any educational, political, or cultural changes have occurred which had the potential to cause changes in the educational ecosystem*. This Study originated as a response to changes in the educational and cultural landscape since a similar project was conducted ten years ago in 2006.

If the Study is replicated, we would not expect to see dramatic gains. Rather we would hope to see small, but steady, increases in the amount of classroom time spent teaching African American history; increases in the use of NMAAHC resources specifically to support teachers who are novice communicators of African American history; increases in new, stronger pedagogy among teachers who are expert communicators of African American history; and additions or refinements to current African American history taught which produces more subtle, richer history.

When comparing the results of a new study to an old study, ask the following analytical questions:

- a. Is there a difference in the results?
- b. What changes to the educational or cultural ecosystem could attribute to the difference?
- c. What might this difference (or similarity) tell NMAAHC or other museums or researchers about the state of African American history teaching in the past 5/10 years?
- d. What might this difference (or similarity) tell NMAAHC or other museums or researchers about the state of African American history teaching in the next 5/10 years?

### GUIDELINES FOR STUDY

#### **2015 Supplement**

The supplement section is needed for the 2015 study, which can be completed as late as mid-2017 and still be appropriate and valid. We suggest holding two focus groups in the local area (DC, Maryland, Virginia) with novice communicators. The focus groups should try to determine what the novice communicators see as obstacles to dedicating more class time to African American history and how NMAAHC can support them and their students. These responses should be appended to this benchmark report and considered a part of all future replication and comparison efforts.

## 2020 Replication Study

### *Intended Curriculum*

Future studies should include a review of the intended curriculum. In 2015, a review of the State Standards was used as an indicator of the intended curriculum. In future replications of this study, we do not recommend looking at state standards for the following reasons:

- Standards are unique to each state. Some states include a lot of specific content and other states include no content. The standards for different states are not comparable.
- State standards do not fully explain what teachers teach. Teachers have to balance standards given at the state, country, and local levels, topics that they themselves feel are important, and topics that will be included on standardized testing.
- Common core standards are skills based and not content based. As more states move to using common core, the state standards will include less specific content.

### *Enacted Curriculum*

Future studies should also include a review of the enacted curriculum that teachers actually teach in their classrooms. We recommend gathering these data using the following methods:

#### *Survey*

Sample size: minimum 250 completed and useable surveys.

Suggestion: Collect 300-325 surveys to ensure that you will have 250 completed and usable surveys.

#### *Focus Groups*

Sample size: 6 focus groups (or 30 long interviews)

- 3 focus groups with teachers who self-select as expert communicators of African American history (or 15 long interviews)
- 3 focus groups with teachers who self-select as novice communicators of African American history (or 15 long interviews)

Lastly, there are several important points to consider when replicating this Study.

1. Do not compare the results of practiced communicators to that of novice communicators. These groups have different experiences and needs and should not be compared.
2. It is possible that NMAAHC may choose to drop some questions or simplify others depending on the needs of NMAAHC and researchers. Although questions can change, NMAAHC should be careful to make sure that newly refined questions elicit responses which are comparable to past data and findings. If not, then it will be difficult if not impossible to see changes over time.
3. As with the survey, questions may be refined or dropped at this time and NMAAHC should be careful to make sure that newly refined questions elicit responses which are comparable to past data and findings. If not, then it will be difficult if not impossible to see changes over time.