



# Illinois State Board of Education


100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001  
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**Darren Reisberg**  
*Chair of the Board*

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor  
The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Minority Leader  
The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President  
The Honorable Dan McConchie, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable Emanuel "Chris" Welch, Speaker of the House

FROM: Dr. Carmen I. Ayala   
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: April 7, 2021

SUBJECT: The Black History Curriculum Task Force Report: Statewide Survey Results

Pursuant to [House Resolution 1098](#), the Black History Curriculum Task Force Report: Statewide Survey Results constitutes an audit of responding Illinois public school districts' K-12 history curriculum in regard to the following questions:

- Does the district's curricular material, no matter the format, contain a current unit on African American history?
- At what grade school level does the district begin teaching African American history?
- At what level does the district stop teaching African American history?
- Does standardized testing include testing on African American history, and if so, at what levels?
- What is ISBE's position on teaching African American history, what are its protocols, and what are its penalties if its instructions are not being followed?

This report is transmitted on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education. For additional copies of this report or for more specific information, please contact Amanda Elliott, executive director of Legislative Affairs, at (217) 782-6510 or [aelliott@isbe.net](mailto:aelliott@isbe.net).

cc: Secretary of the Senate  
Clerk of the House  
Legislative Research Unit  
State Government Report Center

**The Illinois Black History Curriculum Task Force Report:  
Statewide Survey Results**

Black History Curriculum Task Force

Facilitated by the Illinois State Board of Education, Research and Evaluation Center

March 2021

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## Executive Summary

All public elementary and high schools in Illinois are mandated by [105 ILCS 5/27-20.4](#) to include in their curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Black history across content areas, with the rationale that this scholarship will contribute to the affirmation of Illinois students to respect and dignify people of all races. [House Resolution 1098](#) created the [Black History Curriculum Task Force](#) and charged it with conducting a one-time audit of the K-12 curriculum of every Illinois public school district. Mainly, the Task Force assessed the extent to which districts in Illinois included the following required topics of study in their curriculum:

Topic 1: Black History in Government

Topic 2: Black History in the Arts

Topic 3: Black History in the Humanities

Topic 4: Black History in the Sciences

Topic 5: The Struggle to Achieve Fair Treatment

Topic 6: The History of the African Slave Trade

Topic 7: The History of Slavery in the Americas

Topic 8: Vestiges of Slavery

More specifically, the audit surveyed the following:

- Does the district's curricular material, no matter the format, contain a current unit on African American history?
- At what grade school level does the district begin teaching African American history?
- At what level does the district stop teaching African American history?

- Does standardized testing include material on African American history, and if so, at what levels?
- What is the position of the Illinois State Board of Education on teaching African American history, what are its protocols, and what are its penalties if its instructions are not being followed?

To this end, the Black History Curriculum Task Force developed, administered, and collected the results of a survey that was distributed to all Illinois public school districts in the fall of 2020. Of the 852 districts in Illinois, 617 (72%) completed the survey.

### **Key Findings**

- Overall, 77% of participating districts met compliance. Seventy percent of elementary, 82% of unit, and 81% of high school districts met compliance. Compliance was met if district representatives indicated that they included all eight content areas in their curriculum.
- Different district representatives completed the survey. Superintendents (40%) were largely represented in the sample, followed by directors of curriculum and instruction (14%) and principals (10%).
- The majority of districts that completed the survey indicated that they include all eight topics in their *curricula*. Topic 4 was included the *least* (86%), while Topics 6 and 7 were included the *most* in district curricula (97% for each topic).
- The majority of districts that completed the survey indicated that they include all eight topics in their *testing*. Topic 4 was included the *least* (62%), while Topics 6 and 7 were included the *most* in district testing (82% for each topic).

- Districts are testing for topics at a lower rate. For instance, although 91% of districts include Topic 2, only 65% of them include this topic in their district testing.
- The type of district largely determines when districts start teaching, stop teaching, and test for each topic. Topics 1 through 5 were first taught in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band in elementary and unit districts, and Topics 6 through 8 were initially taught in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Most elementary districts stated that they stop teaching each topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. Most unit and high school districts stop teaching each topic in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. The 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band was the most identified as the grade band where districts include testing for all eight topics.
- Respondents were asked about how well their district helps “constitute an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and people and to forever eliminate every form of discrimination in their lives and career.” Six hundred seven districts provided a rating and rationale for that rating. An overwhelming majority of districts (96.5%) felt that their curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and people to eliminate discrimination in their lives.
- District representatives were asked how they currently include Topics 6 through 8 in their school and district culture and curriculum. Three hundred ninety-five districts provided a response to this optional question. The majority of districts responded that they addressed the content areas by incorporating them into their curricula and utilizing different modalities (e.g., already embedded in courses, primarily English language arts [ELA] and social sciences).

- District representatives were asked to provide the curricula and instructional methods used. Three hundred sixty-seven districts provided a response to this optional question. More than 50 different curricula and/or educational resources were cited, with textbook and curriculum publishers like Pearson, McGraw Hill, and Discovery Education among the most frequently named. A variety of instructional methods were cited, including inquiry-based, class discussions, and document-based questions.
- District representatives were asked what additional topics, themes, or content knowledge they are *currently* teaching about Black history. Three hundred forty-nine districts provided a response to this optional question. Sixty-four respondents stated that they were not currently adding anything, 57 added a greater emphasis on Black leaders and their contributions to society, and 72 added current events to their curriculum. Social justice and the fight for equality (e.g., the Black Lives Matter movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and Jim Crow, etc.) was the most cited topic with 75 references.
- District representatives were asked what additional topics, themes, or content knowledge they *should* be adding about Black history. Three hundred sixty-six districts provided a response to this optional question. Fifty-two district representatives stated that no changes should be made to the curriculum, 47 responded that more emphasis should be placed on Black leaders and their contributions to society, and 36 believed they should add more current events to their curriculum. Again, the most frequently cited addition was social justice and the fight for equality with 78 references.
- District representatives were asked what educational resources they used to implement the social studies curriculum in their district. Two hundred fifty-six districts provided a response to this optional question. A variety of resources were cited, including popular



textbooks (e.g., McGraw Hill and Pearson, etc.) and tools (e.g., Newsela and Facing History, etc.).

### **The Role of ISBE in Teaching Black History in Illinois**

The Task Force was also charged with defining the role that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) plays in encouraging and monitoring the compliance of [105 ILCS 5/27-20.4](#) in all districts in Illinois. Specifically, what is ISBE's position on teaching African American history, what are its protocols, and what are its penalties if its instructions are not being followed?

#### ***ISBE's Position on Teaching Black History***

The agency's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, which ISBE adopted on Nov. 19, 2020, contains the following equity statement, which encompasses support for the teaching of Black history:

Illinois has an urgent and collective responsibility to achieve educational equity by ensuring that all policies, programs, and practices affirm the strengths that each and every child brings within their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and by delivering the comprehensive supports, programs, and educational opportunities they need to succeed.

ISBE also provided this statement:

Black history is integral to understanding our nation's past, present, and future; no history of this country is complete without it. All students deserve an inclusive, contextualized, empowering, and transformative Black history education. Students who participate in ethnic studies become better students, with better attendance, higher GPAs, higher test scores, more earned credits, and greater civic engagement (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cammarota and Romero, 2009; Dee & Penner, 2016; Kana'iaupuni et al., 2010). Effective Black history education connects to events today and progresses beyond

learning about Black Americans to learning from Black Americans. Achieving this vision of Black history education for all students in all schools will lead to stronger and more just communities across Illinois.

***ISBE's Protocols for Teaching Black History***

ISBE includes the statutory Black history requirements in the instrument used by Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) to conduct compliance audits (Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools [IARSS], n.d.). ISBE and the ROEs offer technical assistance and supports to school districts to support compliance.

***Penalties if ISBE's Instructions are Not Being Followed***

ISBE may take recognition action against school districts for significant or persistent compliance issues (105 ILCS 5/2-3.25, 2015).

## **The Illinois Black History Curriculum Task Force: Results of Statewide Survey**

### **Background**

The Amistad Commission was established by [20 ILCS 3405/22](#) in 2005. The commission is responsible for the survey, design, encouragement, and promotion of the implementation of Black history education and awareness programs throughout the State of Illinois. It explicitly seeks to educate the public and all Illinois public school students on the following four historical and thematic strands:

1. The African slave trade
2. Slavery in America
3. The vestiges of slavery in this country
4. The contributions of African Americans to the United States

The commission is also tasked with the continual development of learning opportunities, seminars, institutes, special events, and the commemoration of the events that memorialize the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in America and their struggle for freedom, liberty, and equality (20 ILCS 3405/22, 2005, para. A). The Amistad Commission also mandates the participation of ISBE in its efforts to educate the Illinois public on its four strands in the following ways:

- Market and distribute topical educational materials to relevant stakeholders;
- Conduct at least one teacher workshop annually on topical content;
- Assist the commission in monitoring the inclusion of slavery materials and curricula in the state's educational system;

- Consult with the commission in ways it can survey, catalog, and further extend present teaching regarding the slave trade and American slavery (20 ILCS 3405/22, 2005, para. K).

Amistad Commission member appointments have remained vacant since 2015 when prior terms expired (State of Illinois, n.d.).

All public elementary and high schools are mandated by [105 ILCS 5/27-20.4](#) to include in their curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Black history across content areas, with the rationale that this scholarship will contribute to the affirmation of Illinois students to respect and dignify people of all races. The School Code gives the State Superintendent of Education the ability to prepare and disseminate instructional materials in the aid of this curriculum. However, individual school boards possess the final determination of whether to use these instructional materials in their district and the minimum instructional time that will be required for this content.

### **The Black History Curriculum Task Force**

Representative La Shawn K. Ford sponsored [House Resolution 1098](#) that created the [Black History Curriculum Task Force](#) (see Appendix A), which was charged with conducting a one-time audit of every Illinois school district's history curriculum from K-12 and reporting its findings to the Clerk of the Illinois House of Representatives, upon which the Task Force will dissolve. The purpose of its audit is to review the following:

- (1) Does the district's curricular material, no matter the format, contain a current unit on African American history?
- (2) At what grade school level does the district begin teaching African American history?
- (3) At what level does the district stop teaching African American history?

(4) Does standardized testing include material on African American history, and if so, at what levels?

(5) What is ISBE's position on teaching African American history, what are its protocols, and what are its penalties if its instructions are not being followed? (HR 1098, 2018, para. 2)

To this end, the Black History Curriculum Task Force developed, administered, and collected the results of a survey that was distributed to all Illinois public school districts in the fall of 2020.

The aim of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the historical background and rationale for Black history education in the United States, to report the results of the statewide survey, to discuss trends found in the results, and to recommend next steps for the implementation of Black history education in Illinois public K-12 schools.

### **Placing this Report in Context**

It is important to note the context at the time of this audit. The year 2020 exemplified the complexities of American society, contending with heightened political division; widespread outrage and protests over police brutality on Black Americans (Rogers et al., 2019; Settles-Tidwell et al., in press; Wray-Lake et al., 2018); and the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the global economy and life as we know it. Moreover, these complexities are shaped by the historical inheritance of American structural racism, which has used policies and traumatic practices, including, but not limited to, Jim Crow laws; redlining; “Stop and Frisk”; internment camps; “Yellow Peril”; anti-Semitic educational quotas; “Manifest Destiny” campaigns; Native American boarding schools; Muslim travel bans; and Arizona State Bill 1070 to systematically exclude, segregate, oppress, “whitewash,” and vilify specific racial, ethnic, and religious groups (Anti-Defamation League, 2020; Bear, 2008; De Leon, 2020; National Conference of State

Legislatures, n.d.; No Muslim Ban Ever, 2019; Oskooii, 2016; Pitt, 2011; Settles-Tidwell et al., in press).

Centered within this landscape is the American classroom, striving for a sense of normality while coming to terms with the inevitable critique of its role in these issues. The year 2020 saw both students and educators redefine civic engagement, constructive dialogue, and what constitutes American history (Cumberbatch & Trujillo-Pagán, 2016). Regardless of best intentions, “we don’t leave our racism, biases, political agenda, or ideologies at home when we enter classroom spaces” (Ferlazzo, 2020, p. 5).

## **Literature Review**

### **Black History Education in America**

Kana’iaupuni et al. (2010) states, “Education is a cultural process. Schools are the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge and skills as well as the values, practices, and culture of a society” (p. 2). Upon close examination of the modern American classroom, society must question whose values and culture are being ingrained as normative and commendable. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010, 2019) reports that Black or African Americans<sup>1</sup> comprise approximately 13% of the population in the United States. While the African diaspora is well known to have inhabited the Americas since the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD, much of this rich history and the integral contributions of people of Black, African, and Caribbean descent to the construction, growth, and maintained prosperity of the United States of America has been historically absent in both the dominant societal narrative and American K-12 curricula. Particularly and remarkably, the direct correlation between the African slave trade and European and, later, American economic

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is of respondents to the 2019 American Community Survey who indicated their race as “African American or Black alone.” People who identify as Black *and* another race, or multiracial, are not included in this number. This inclusion would notably increase that population estimate.

dominance throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Williams, 1944, as cited in Mintz, n.d.) is rarely unpacked thoroughly in the classroom for its historical, legislative, and socioeconomic impact.

The groundbreaking work of acclaimed African American scholars, such as George W. Williams, Eric Williams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles H. Wesley, Benjamin A. Quarles, Rayford W. Logan, and Carter G. Woodson, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is heralded for the creation and publishing of information about African Americans that could be used in school curricula. These scholars are also directly linked to the subsequent ethnic studies movement, emphasizing the histories and cultures of specific ethnic groups, that would signify a major paradigm shift in research and literature (Banks, 1992, 1993). Carter G. Woodson, who is considered to be the “father of Black history” (King & Brown, 2014), posited throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that a direct counternarrative of the racist, contemporary rhetoric regarding Black Americans in the United States was necessary for the development and progression of African Americans and American society. Woodson’s corpus of work in and contributions to African American history include 27 books; two scholarly journals, notably including *The Journal of Negro History*, the first scholarly journal devoted to African American history; and educational resources for teachers, students, and the public, including numerous textbooks for elementary, secondary, and higher education students.

Most notably, Woodson’s contributions also included the co-founding of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (later named the Association for the Study of African American Life and History [ASALH]), the first Black history organization with the mission to “promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community” (ASALH, n.d., “Mission” section), and the co-founding along

with the ASALH of Negro History Week in 1926 (later renamed Black History Week in the 1960s and lengthened to Black History Month in 1976 by President Gerald Ford). This week was dedicated to promote the study of African American history to students and adults and intended as dedicated time in the month of February to focus on and elevate the contributions of Blacks to and within American society (Dagbovie, 2004; King, 2017; King & Brown, 2014; King et al., 2010).

Woodson and the ASALH cited an immediate need for Black history resources for teachers and laypersons alike. They were early voices arguing the benefit of a richer, deeper, and more contextualized understanding of African and African American history as a necessity for corrective and transformative Black education in the American educational framework:

Woodson understood the significance of conceptualizing African history as it directly related to the construction of African Americans as a people without a history. . . . The retelling of African history was not simply to challenge the historical canon or just to documents ancient histories, but also to show that people of African descent were not just enslaved, colonized, or primitive people — but a people of profound literary, scientific, and intellectual accomplishments. (King et al., 2017, p. 213)

In the 1960s, the legacy of these early scholars, coupled with the Civil Rights Movement, created a catalyst for increased and separate educational programs that focused on the experiences and knowledge of ethnic groups in America. This early ethnic studies movement marked a watershed that created opportunities for various groups, including African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, and Asian Americans, to finally witness their cultural experiences and perspectives catalogued in the annals of history (Banks, 1993). By the late '60s, seven states (California, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Oklahoma)



had passed laws that required or recommended the achievements of people of color be included in school curricula; six more states were in the process of enacting similar policy statements (Walker Levy, 1969, p. 5).

The 1980s and '90s further demanded that these ethnic studies no longer be marginal or elective but considered core and fully integrated into mainstream curriculum. Over the course of the next three decades, a growing number of states and cities implemented formal legislation and commissions in the effort to mandate Black and other ethnic groups' histories into their curricula. In a landmark event in 2002, New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey signed into law the Amistad Bill (A1301), named after a Spanish slave ship on which there was a famous slave revolt in 1839. The Amistad Bill, among numerous other legislative actions, resulted in the formation of the Amistad Commission, whose mandate promoted a wide implementation of educational awareness programs that covered the African slave trade, slavery in America, and African Americans' contributions to society (N.J. Amistad Commission, n.d.). In 2005, the states of New York and Illinois followed suit, establishing their own Amistad Commissions with similar oversight and accountability (Illinois General Assembly, 2005; N.Y. Department of State, n.d.).

In May of 2020, Ohio Representative Marcia L. Fudge introduced the HR 6902, the Black History is American History Act, as follows:

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of African descent in the settling and founding of America, the economic and political environments that led to the development, institutionalization, and abolition of slavery and its impact on all Americans, the exploration and expansion of America, impact on and contributions to the

development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes. (“Titles” section)

The passing of this bill would be yet another important step in making quality Black historical educational programming accessible to the broader American public.

In September 2020, President Donald Trump issued the now-revoked [Executive Order No. 13,950](#) (2020), which labeled as “divisive” and “anti-American” certain frameworks and practices that acknowledge race and racism and banned federal employees, contractors, and grantees from promoting the identified concepts.

### ***State Legislative Initiatives***

At present, 13 states have passed educational legislation regarding the implementation of Black history. Seven of these 13 states (Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Mississippi, and Rhode Island) have passed laws requiring Black history to be taught in public schools, with accountability monitored by specially created K-12 Black history oversight committees; six states (California, Colorado, Michigan, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington) have passed laws regarding Black history but without a required oversight committee (King, 2017). The implementation, professional development for teachers, accountability, and scope of Black history taught varies widely from state to state, with some focusing on Black history primarily in the context of the Civil Rights Movement. Other states, such as Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, have Amistad Commissions that highlight connections between the African slave trade and its modern implications for African Americans in today’s society (Illinois General Assembly, 2005; King, 2017; N.J. Amistad Commission, n.d.; N.Y. Department of State, n.d.).

In January 2021, Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford and Representative Carol Ammons sponsored legislation in Illinois that requires ISBE to adopt revised social science learning standards that are inclusive and reflective of all individuals in this country on or before July 1, 2021. The legislation also created the Inclusive American History Commission, which will provide technical assistance in revising social science standards and review available resources and provide guidance, tools, and support for learning standards and professional development. On March 8, 2021, Governor JB Pritzker enacted this legislation, creating [Public Act 101-0654](#) (2021; see also Veskauf, 2021). ISBE continues to review learning standards to ensure that all Illinois students receive the best education possible.

Numerous cities and school districts around the nation, such as Chicago, Minneapolis, and Philadelphia, have led the charge in recent years to require Black history in their classrooms, ranging from elective history classes and social justice units to K-12 curricular integration across content areas (King, 2017). Chicago Public Schools, following the 2013 incorporation of Black history, launched a Latino studies program in 2015 (Loewus, 2013; Sarabia, 2015). In 2017, [Oregon](#) became the first state in the nation to have an ethnic studies curriculum requirement in K-12 education, which will be overseen by a specially convened advisory group (June, 2017). That same year also marked Seattle Public Schools' support of a developed ethnic studies curriculum in grades PreK-12, also overseen by an Ethnic Studies Task Force (Seattle Public Schools, n.d.). School districts throughout California have implemented ethnic studies courses that are available to their students; however, similarly to Washington state, no statewide mandate yet exists that requires this material to be taught.

## **Culturally Relevant Education in K-12**

### ***Student Achievement and Outcomes***

Sociologists and educational scholars have long asserted that classrooms replicate society's structural inequities within their walls. Within the educational system, indigenous and other racial-ethnic communities have historically been conditioned to reject or ignore their values, knowledge, and practices, which has created and contributed to longstanding educational and socioeconomic disparities, especially "among cultural groups that have not voluntarily migrated to this country with the intent of assimilating (e.g., American Indians, African Americans, and Native Hawaiians)" (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2010, p. 3). Therefore, it is the duty of those who work within and have the most influence on the classroom to disrupt these oppressive patterns and, instead, create safe microcosms of critical social analysis, civic engagement, and personal growth and agency toward the goal of equitable student achievement. Culturally relevant education in American classrooms has received strong support as well as met with vehement opposition over the last decade, as the political climate and discussions on education reform have created a highly polarized environment.

Nevertheless, the growing empirical and qualitative research on ethnic studies and culturally relevant coursework suggests that these efforts have a profound and positive effect on student outcomes. Most notable are a number of studies on the effects of Latinx student participation in the now-defunct Mexican American Studies (MAS) program<sup>2</sup> in the Tucson Unified School District. Cammarota and Romero (2009) reported that Chicanx students enrolled

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<sup>2</sup> The controversial dissolution of the MAS program occurred due to the passage of Arizona's HB 2281 in 2010. That bill was written by the Arizona Superintendent of Instruction and signed into law by the Governor of Arizona. It allowed the withholding of funds for any district found to offer classes that advocated ethnic solidarity, promoted resentment toward a race, were designed for a particular race, or promoted the overthrow of the U.S. government (Cabrera et al., 2014).

in the Social Justice Education Project significantly outscored White students on state standardized tests and attained higher graduation rates. Cabrera et al. (2014) found that participation in the MAS program led to an overall increased probability of graduation by 9.5%; the probability of an increased subsequent Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) reading test score, after an initial failing attempt on the AIMS, of 9.3%; and a higher intention of enrollment in tertiary education than their peers who were not enrolled in the MAS program. A legislative ban halted the MAS program, but the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona deemed the legislative ban on the program to be racially motivated and unconstitutional (Astor, 2017).

Additional studies include one by Dee and Penner (2016) on the effects of an ethnic studies course offered to ninth-grade students in the San Francisco Unified School District, showing that participation increased attendance by 21%, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23. The students within this study were Asian, Hispanic, Black, and White, with White students treated as a reference group. The study did note that within these demographics, male and Hispanic students experienced the most statistically significant effects of the ethnic studies curriculum overall.

The landmark Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education study (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2010) documented the numerous positive effects of cultural-based education (CBE) on native Hawaiian students, indicating that not only did CBE increase students' civic engagement with their local communities, environmental conservation, and personal socioemotional development, but it accounted for statistically significant improvements on math and reading outcomes when compared to the respective scores of peers whose teachers did not center their practices in CBE. The integration of these cultural norms and praxes fostered an environment where CBE was

normed and considered best practices instead of conflicting, divergent, or supplemental to teaching pedagogy and classroom culture.

A study by Altschul et al. (2006) of African American and Latinx students in Detroit as they transitioned from middle school to high school noted that although grades dropped during this transition, the students with the strong self-reported ethnic-identity pride (termed racial-ethnic identity<sup>3</sup>) dropped the least. A study by Duncan (2012) of eighth-grade students at KIPP: STAR College Prep School in Harlem, composed of 97% African, African American, or Hispanic students, showed that after implementing an Afrocentric U.S. history curriculum, students scored significantly higher on the summative, standardized New York State Social Studies Test than students who in previous years at the school had received a traditional Eurocentric curriculum. Furthermore, parent questionnaires conveyed a strong link between the Afrocentric curriculum and their children's "self-efficacy and emotional response and connection to the curriculum" (Duncan, 2012, p. 94).

### ***Culturally Relevant Education***

The purpose of multicultural education is to rebuild and reform the educational structure so that students from diverse backgrounds can attain educational equality (Banks, 1993). The aim of this report is not to offer a detailed examination of all scholarship on these efforts; however, the developments of culturally relevant education from multicultural education literature are noteworthy in presenting a rationale and theoretical framework for Black history education in American schools. The work of Geneva Gay (2002, 2010, 2018) in culturally relevant teaching could be utilized to discuss this framework, but the work of Gloria Ladson-

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<sup>3</sup> Racial-ethnic identity consists of three aspects: connectedness, feeling connected to one's racial-ethnic group; awareness of racism, the awareness that other might not value the in-group; and embedded achievement, the perception that one's in-group is characterized by academic achievement (Altschul et al., 2006, p. 1155).

Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2004, 2006) in culturally relevant pedagogy in education may arguably be the most apropos because it specifically relates to race (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Muñiz, 2019).

Furthermore, Gholdy Muhhamad calls “for teachers to connect their teaching to the human condition and to frame their teaching practices in response to the social and uneven times in which we live” (Ferlazzo, 2020, p. 2). Culturally relevant pedagogy examines curricula, educational policy, and classroom practices through a multicultural lens. Counternarrative is one such practice utilized to elevate a more holistic and just narrative, inclusive of heavily contextualized and diverse perspectives. Delgado (1989) further argues that by design the stories and histories of the dominant group “remind it of its identity in relation to outgroups and provide a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural” (p. 2240). Counternarrative functions as a way to recognize and normalize the experiences, beliefs, and knowledge of people of color (Banks, 1993; Crenshaw, 1989; Dixson & Anderson, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This function is ever germane to American public K-12 classrooms as the educational landscape has and continues to become increasingly diverse; the U.S. Department of Education (2019, 2020) reported that in 2014 students of color became the new collective majority, outnumbering non-Hispanic White students for the first time in U.S. history. Illinois’ K-12 student enrollment mirrors this trajectory.

Ergo, Black history education could be perceived as such counternarrative and its integration as one of numerous ways K-12 students should have authentic and critical experiences with this nation’s past and present. The inclusion of Black history in American K-12 curricula is paramount to fighting a pervasive narrative that positions accomplishments and

contributions of Black Americans and other racial groups as an additive framework, supplementary to the “official” curriculum, historically oversimplified, and all too often delivered without context and connection to the impact of these events to today’s society (Banks, 1993; King & Brown, 2014; Patterson, 1971). Critical self-reflection will allow teachers to have an opportunity to reject reproduction of current inequities, replacing color blind classrooms and discourse with transformative practices. The integration of Black history throughout the curriculum is yet another way to progress the evolution of our collective social knowledge from learning *about* Africans Americans to learning *from* African Americans (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

### ***Implications for Teachers***

A 2015 study conducted through the National Museum of African American History and Culture focusing on how African American history is taught nationwide found that only 8-9% of total class time was devoted to Black history in social studies classes, even though teachers considered it to be integral in understanding the complexity of U.S. history (King, 2017; Oberg & Kartchner, 2016). Looking more explicitly at content proficiency in prominent strands of American history, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC; SPLC, 2011, 2018) reported that only 8% of U.S. high school seniors knew that slavery was the central cause of the Civil War. Only 2% of U.S. 12th-graders who took the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress U.S. History Exam were able to identify the two major conditions of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision -- that segregation existed and that segregation applied to schools. The SPLC (2014) additionally assessed all 50 states on the depth and breadth of their K-12 history and social studies standards and supports for teaching the Civil Rights Movement and assigned a calculated letter grade based on these factors. It found that 34 states, including Illinois, received a calculated letter grade of D or F, with only six states receiving a C; this



detailed report also noted that many states saw this content as a regional matter or special interest topic specific to Black students.

There is a high level of subjectivity and lack of explicit state or federal policies setting the standard for Black history education in classrooms, so the onus of determining depth and scope ultimately – and far too often – falls to the individual classroom teacher, subject to their expertise and comfort, or lack thereof, with the material. Teachers lacking content knowledge about Black history or serving classrooms with fewer students of color may fall prey to generalized retelling of historical events, missing prime opportunities for students to critically grapple with and analyze the racialized systems of our nation’s past and present and realize their agency for change (Dixson & Anderson, 2018; King, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; SPLC 2014, 2018).

Desires by teachers to effectively teach this challenging and nuanced content to a wide variety of students create a continued demand for states and districts to employ more explicit and in-depth standards of curricula, find higher-quality textbooks and resources, and commit time and funding to the professional development of all school staff on these topics and available resources. Numerous scholars have argued that when teaching the topic of Black history, the teacher must be the primary researcher and develop his or her own expertise and passion for this material in order to best spark the scholarly interest of the students. The understanding of how we arrived at our present can determine how we navigate our future (RIDES, n.d.). King et al. (2014) advise that a designated time and space be created within teacher educator programs so that young teachers can familiarize themselves with African American databases. This would provide a better foundation to ensure teachers enter the classroom with the background information they need and the ability to create effective lessons for this content. Ladson-Billings

(1995) further supports the committed and continued funding and dedicated time for teacher education programs as a means to prepare future and current teachers in ways that nurture equitable and just academic experiences for students from all backgrounds.

It is on this long journey toward academic emancipation that we review the steps Illinois school districts are taking toward this goal. The following sections of this report will introduce a 2020 survey sent to all public school districts in the State of Illinois regarding their implementation of Black history in their curricula and examine the results of this survey. Lastly, this report will include findings and recommendations from the Black History Curriculum Task Force for next steps in Illinois schools and topical legislation.

## Method

An online survey (see Appendix B) with closed-ended and open-ended questions was distributed to district leaders to evaluate the extent to which districts are implementing 105 ILCS 5/27-20.4, which requires every public elementary and high school to include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Black history. The survey was included in *ISBE's Weekly Message* on [November 19, 2019](#), and sent directly to superintendents via the Illinois State Board of Education listserv. All 852 districts in Illinois were invited to complete the survey. The survey was developed, administered, and collected by the Black History Curriculum Task Force to conduct an audit of every school district's history curriculum from PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade in Illinois.

Following the analysis of survey submissions, members of the ISBE Research and Evaluation Center presented preliminary results to Task Force members on [January 29, 2021](#), and presented an overview of the current report to them on [March 4, 2021](#), to get input and feedback. On February 25, 2021, Task Force members received writing prompts (see Appendix C) and were instructed to respond by March 11, 2021. All responses are included in the Recommendations section of this report.

## Survey

### *District Information*

Survey respondents provided the district's name, Region County District Type Schools (RCDS) code and contact information, including name of respondent, title, and email address. Information about district type was matched to the categories listed in the Illinois Report Card. The district types include elementary (PK-8<sup>th</sup> grade), unit (PK-12<sup>th</sup> grade), and high school (9<sup>th</sup>-

12<sup>th</sup> grade). Participant responses were catalogued by grade bands (i.e., PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade).

### ***Closed-Ended Items***

The survey contained eight topic areas:

Topic 1: Black History in Government

Topic 2: Black History in the Arts

Topic 3: Black History in the Humanities

Topic 4: Black History in the Sciences

Topic 5: The Struggle to Achieve Fair Treatment

Topic 6: The History of the African Slave Trade

Topic 7: The History of Slavery in the Americas

Topic 8: Vestiges of Slavery

Each topic had the following set of closed-ended questions:

- (a) Does the district curricular material, no matter the format, include current information on this topic?
- (b) At what grade school level does the district begin teaching information about this topic?
- (c) At what grade school level does the district stop teaching information about this topic?
- (d) Does the district testing include material on this topic?
- (e) At what grade levels does the district testing include material on this topic?

Response options for items (a) and (d) were “Yes” or “No.” Response options for items (b) and (c) were Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Responses were adjusted slightly for some respondents who listed multiple grades. For item (b), the earliest grade listed was taken as the

answer. For instance, for a response with the list “1<sup>st</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Kindergarten, Pre-K,” the answer is “Pre-K.” For item (c), the latest grade listed was taken as the answer. Finally, for item (e), district leaders listed all the grades in which testing included material on that topic, including Pre-K through 12th grade.

### ***District Compliance***

District compliance regarding 105 ILCS 5/27-20.4 was calculated based on the number of “Yes” responses to the first item of each topic (i.e., “Does the district curricular material, no matter the format, include current information on this topic?”). Districts met compliance if they responded “Yes” to all eight items.

### ***Mixed-Methods Item (Topic 9: Affirming Students’ Commitment to Eliminate Discrimination)***

A set of two new questions asked district leaders how well the districts' efforts help eliminate discrimination in their student population: “How well do you feel your curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eliminate every form of discrimination in their lives and careers?” Responses included “Not at all,” “Somewhat,” and “Very Well.” A follow-up question asked district leaders to explain their rationale behind their rating. These two questions refer to items Q7New and Q7NewDesc (Item 7 “Topic 6”<sup>4</sup>) in Appendix B.

### ***Open-Ended Items (Optional Questions)***

The survey included a set of six optional questions. Each question was open-response and not required for the completion of the survey. The questions included the following:

- a. How do you include the information listed in the tables above (i.e., “The history of the African slave trade in the Americas and this country,” “Slavery in the

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<sup>4</sup> Topic 6 in the survey refers to Topic 9 in the current report. Topic 6 in the survey (see Appendix B) was renamed Topic 9 in the current report for easier interpretation of the closed ended, mixed-methods, and open-ended items.

- Americas and this country,” and “The vestiges of slavery in the Americas and this country”) in your school and district culture and curriculum?
- b. Please describe the curricula used and the instructional methods for each grade level. You are welcome to submit samples of your instructional materials to [blackhistorycurriculum@isbe.net](mailto:blackhistorycurriculum@isbe.net).
  - c. What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge are you teaching about Black history?
  - d. What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge should be taught about Black history?
  - e. What educational resources, which may include, but not be limited to, textbook publishers and titles are you using to implement the social studies curriculum in your district?
  - f. Additional comments:

The open-ended responses were analyzed through a multistep coding process. The first step included an initial read to identify patterns and possible codes. The second step in the process was to use the patterns to develop codes from the first read to identify the frequency of the responses for each question. The second read also involved coding the responses for the type of district (elementary, unit, or high school).

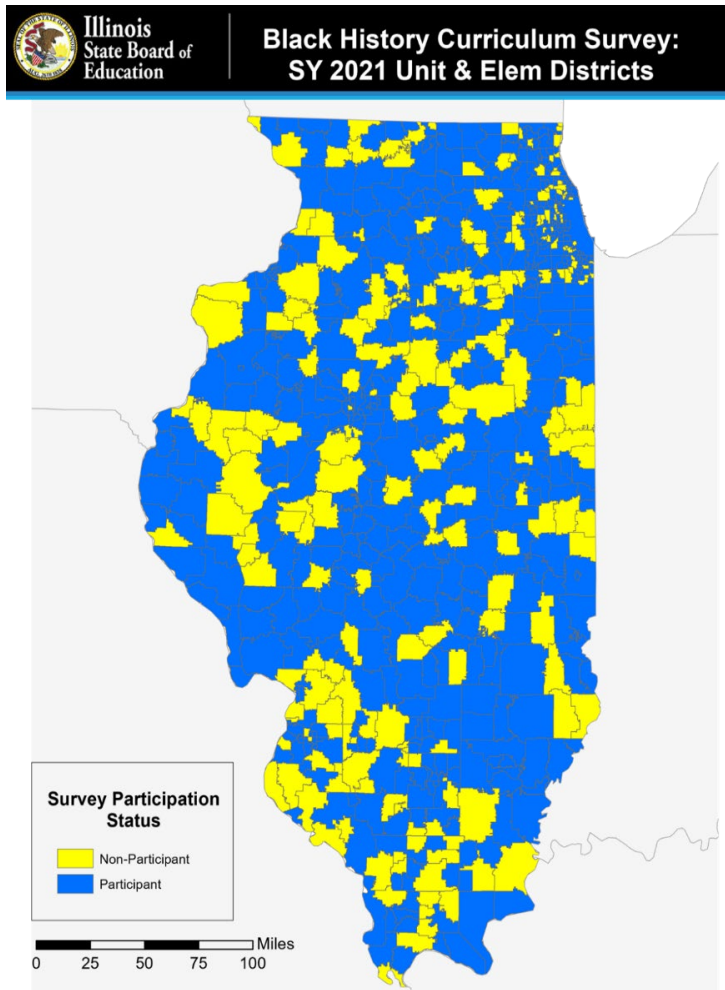
### **Findings**

Of the 852 districts in Illinois, 188 (22%) did not participate in the survey (see Figures 1 and 2, respectively). Forty-seven (6%) of the surveys returned were removed from the analysis for invalid or incomplete data. Thus, the following sections describe the results of the 617 (72%) districts that supplied complete data. Of those districts, 268 (43%) were elementary districts, 274

(44%) were unit districts, and 75 (13%) were high school districts. Different district representatives completed the survey. Superintendents (40%) were largely represented in the sample, followed by directors of curriculum and instruction (14%), and principals (10%; see Table 1).

**Figure 1**

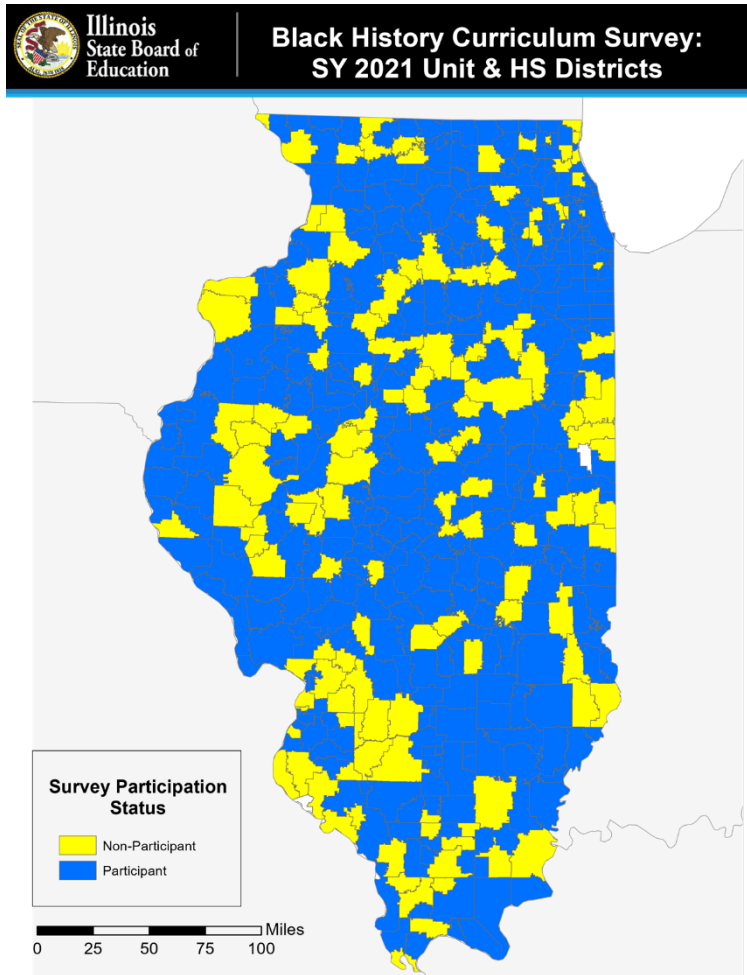
*Survey Participation Status (Unit and Elementary Districts Combined)*





**Figure 2**

*Survey Participation Status (Unit and High School Districts Combined)*



**Table 1***Participant Information*

<b>Participant Title</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Superintendent	247	40%
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	89	14%
Principal	64	10%
Assistant/Associate Superintendent	59	10%
Other	33	5%
Teacher	25	4%
Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning and Innovation	20	3%
Curriculum Coordinator	18	3%
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	18	3%
Director of Teaching and Learning	16	3%
Assistant Principal	10	2%
Subject Department Chair	10	2%
Superintendent/Principal	8	1%
Total	617	100%

## Closed-Ended Items

### *Topic 1: Black History in Government*

Tables 2 through 5 show the results for Topic 1, “Black History in Government.” Results indicate that across district types, 583 (94%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the contributions made by Black individuals and African Americans in government in their curriculum (see Table 2). The majority of elementary (62%) and unit (59%) districts start teaching Black History in Government in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band (see Table 3). Results indicate that 90% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (84%) and high school (96%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 74% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 4). Finally, 33% of students from districts that responded to the survey are tested on this material in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 5).

**Table 2**

*Topic 1: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	246	92%	264	96%	73	97%	583	94%
Not Included in Curriculum	19	7%	7	3%	2	3%	28	5%
Missing	3	1%	3	1%	0	0%	6	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 3**

*Topic 1: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	165	62%	1	0%	163	59%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	328	53%	1	0%
3rd-5th	48	18%	1	0%	56	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	104	17%	1	0%
6th-8th	44	16%	241	90%	41	15%	8	3%	0	0%	0	0%	85	14%	249	40%
9th-12th	1	0%	3	1%	8	3%	229	84%	72	96%	69	92%	81	13%	301	49%
N/A	9	3%	21	8%	5	2%	36	13%	3	4%	6	8%	17	3%	63	10%
Missing	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%	2	0%
Total	268	100%	268	100%	274	100%	274	100%	75	100%	75	100%	617	100%	617	100%

**Table 4***Topic 1: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	178	66%	214	78%	67	89%	459	74%
Not Included in Testing	87	32%	57	21%	8	11%	152	25%
Missing	3	1%	3	1%	0	0%	6	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 5***Topic 1: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	44	50	0	94	9%
3rd-5th	106	124	0	230	22%
6th-8th	168	181	1	350	33%
9th-12th	0	187	66	253	24%
N/A	82	48	8	138	13%
Total	400	590	75	1065	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts

could list multiple grade bands, which would result in grade bands being

counted more than once.

**Topic 2: Black History in the Arts**

Tables 6 through 9 show the results for Topic 2, “Black History in the Arts.” Results indicate that across district types, 562 (91%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the contributions made by Black individuals and African Americans in the arts in their curriculum (see Table 6). The majority of elementary (56%) and unit districts (58%) start teaching Black History in the Arts in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band (see Table 7). Results indicate that 84% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (80%) and high school (97%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 65% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 8). Finally, 29% of students from districts that completed the survey are tested on this topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 9).

**Table 6***Topic 2: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	239	89%	249	91%	74	99%	562	91%
Not Included in Curriculum	27	10%	23	8%	1	1%	51	8%
Missing	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%	4	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 7**

*Topic 2: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	151	56%	1	0%	160	58%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0	311	50%	2	0%
3rd-5th	49	18%	6	2%	45	16%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0	94	15%	9	1%
6th-8th	42	16%	224	84%	38	14%	8	3%	0	0%	0	0	80	13%	232	38%
9th-12th	1	0%	3	1%	15	5%	218	80%	73	97%	70	93%	89	14%	291	47%
N/A	24	9%	33	12%	16	6%	44	16%	2	3%	5	7%	42	7%	82	13%
Missing	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 8***Topic 2: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	144	54%	192	70%	66	88%	402	65%
Not Included in Testing	122	46%	80	29%	9	12%	211	34%
Missing	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%	4	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 9***Topic 2: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	35	51	0	86	8%
3rd-5th	89	125	0	214	20%
6th-8th	133	181	1	315	29%
9th-12th	2	187	67	256	24%
N/A	118	75	9	202	19%
Total	377	619	77	1073	81%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.



**Topic 3: Black History in the Humanities**

Tables 10 through 13 show the results for Topic 3, “Black History in the Humanities.” Results indicate that across district types, 577 (94%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the contributions made by Black individuals and African Americans in the humanities in their curriculum (see Table 10). The majority of elementary (56%) and unit districts (54%) start teaching Black History in the Humanities in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band (see Table 11). Results indicate that 89% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (80%) and high school (89%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 71% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 12). Finally, 30% of students from districts that completed the survey are tested on this material in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 13).

**Table 10***Topic 3: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	247	92%	257	94%	73	97%	577	94%
Not Included in Curriculum	17	6%	14	5%	2	3%	33	5%
Missing	4	1%	3	1%		0%	7	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 11**

*Topic 3: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	151	56%	2	1%	148	54%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	299	48%	3	0%
3rd-5th	58	22%	3	1%	53	19%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	111	18%	6	1%
6th-8th	43	16%	238	89%	44	16%	13	5%	0	0%	0	0%	87	14%	251	41%
9th-12th	1	0%	3	1%	18	7%	220	80%	72	96%	67	89%	91	15%	290	47%
N/A	12	4%	19	7%	10	4%	36	13%	3	4%	8	11%	25	4%	63	10%
Missing	3	1%	3	1%	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 12***Topic 3: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	166	62%	209	76%	66	88%	441	71%
Not Included in Testing	98	37%	62	23%	9	12%	169	27%
Missing	4	1%	3	1%	0	0%	7	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 13***Topic 3: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	38	48	0	86	8%
3rd-5th	102	113	0	215	21%
6th-8th	153	153	1	307	30%
9th-12th	1	176	66	243	24%
N/A	100	61	8	169	17%
Total	394	551	75	1020	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

**Topic 4: Black History in the Sciences**

Tables 14 through 17 show the results for Topic 4, “Black History in the Sciences.” Results indicate that across district types, 531 (86%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the contributions made by Black individuals and African Americans in the sciences in their curriculum (see Table 14). Forty-five percent of elementary districts and 43% of unit districts start teaching Black History in the Sciences in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band (see Table 15). Results indicate that 79% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (73%) and high school (80%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 62% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 16). Finally, 28% of students from districts that participated in the survey are tested on this material in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 17).

**Table 14***Topic 4: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	226	84%	243	89%	62	83%	531	86%
Not Included in Curriculum	38	14%	27	10%	13	17%	78	13%
Missing	4	1%	4	1%		0%	8	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 15**

*Topic 4: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	120	45%	1	0%	119	43%	0	0%					239	39%	1	0%
3rd-5th	62	23%	6	2%	74	27%	6	2%		0%			136	22%	12	2%
6th-8th	46	17%	212	79%	40	15%	14	5%		0%			86	14%	226	37%
9th-12th	1	0%	0	0%	13	5%	201	73%	62	83%	60	80%	76	12%	261	42%
N/A	36	13%	46	17%	26	9%	50	18%	13	17%	15	20%	75	12%	111	18%
Missing	3	1%	3	1%	2	1%	3	1%		0%		0%	5	1%	6	1%
Total	268	100%	268	100%	274	100%	274	100%	75	100%	75	100%	617	100%	617	100%

**Table 16***Topic 4: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	141	53%	194	71%	49	65%	384	62%
Not Included in Testing	123	46%	76	28%	26	35%	225	36%
Missing	4	1%	4	1%	0	0%	8	1%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 17***Topic 4: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High		Total
			School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	31	36	0	67	7%
3rd-5th	89	110	0	199	20%
6th-8th	132	144	1	277	28%
9th-12th	2	158	50	210	21%
N/A	125	79	24	228	23%
Total	379	527	75	981	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

***Topic 5: The Struggle to Achieve Fair Treatment***

Tables 18 through 21 show the results for Topic 5, “The Struggle to Achieve Fair Treatment.” Results indicate that across district types, 577 (94%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the socio-economic struggle that Black and African Americans experienced collectively in striving to achieve fair and equal treatment in their curriculum (see Table 18). Thirty-three percent of elementary districts and 42% of unit districts start teaching Topic 5 in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band (see Table 19). Results indicate that 89% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (83%) and high school (93%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 76% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 20). Finally, 34% of students from districts that completed the survey are tested in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 21).

**Table 18**

*Topic 5: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)		Unit (n = 274)		High School (n = 75)		Total (n = 617)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Included in Curriculum	243	91%	259	95%	75	100%	577	94%
Not Included in Curriculum	20	7%	10	4%		0%	30	5%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%		0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 19**

*Topic 5: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	88	33%	1	0%	116	42%	0	0%					204	33%	1	0%
3rd-5th	84	31%	1	0%	75	27%	5	2%	0%				159	26%	6	1%
6th-8th	78	29%	238	89%	58	21%	8	3%	0%				136	22%	246	40%
9th-12th	1	0%	2	1%	15	5%	228	83%	74	99%	70	93%	90	15%	300	49%
N/A	12	4%	21	8%	7	3%	30	11%	1	1%	5	7%	20	3%	56	9%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%	3	1%	3	1%		0%		0%	8	1%	8	1%
Total	268	100%	268	100%	274	100%	274	100%	75	100%	75	100%	617	100%	617	100%



**Table 20***Topic 5: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	181	68%	215	78%	70	93%	466	76%
Not Included in Testing	82	31%	54	20%	5	7%	141	23%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%	0	0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 21***Topic 5: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	27	39	0	66	6%
3rd-5th	101	114	0	215	21%
6th-8th	175	172	1	348	34%
9th-12th	2	185	67	254	25%
N/A	80	50	6	136	13%
Total	385	560	74	1019	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

**Topic 6: The History of the African Slave Trade**

Tables 22 through 25 show the results for Topic 6, “The History of the African Slave Trade.” Results indicate that across district types, 596 (97%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the history of the African slave trade in their curriculum (see Table 22). Fifty percent of elementary districts and 48% of unit districts start teaching on the History of the African Slave Trade in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 23). Results indicate that 91% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (85%) and high school (95%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 82% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 24). Finally, 37% of students in participating districts are tested on this topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 25).

**Table 22***Topic 6: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	257	96%	264	96%	75	100%	596	97%
Not Included in Curriculum	6	2%	5	2%		0%	11	2%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%		0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 23**

*Topic 6: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	57	21%	2	1%	59	22%	1	0%					116	19%	3	0%
3rd-5th	133	50%	3	1%	132	48%	5	2%	0%				265	43%	8	1%
6th-8th	70	26%	244	91%	63	23%	9	3%	0%				133	22%	253	41%
9th-12th	1	0%	1	0%	12	4%	232	85%	74	99%	71	95%	87	14%	304	49%
N/A	3	1%	14	5%	5	2%	23	8%	1	1%	4	5%	9	1%	41	7%
Missing	4	1%	4	1%	3	1%	4	1%	0%		0%		7	1%	8	1%
Total	268	100%	268	100%	274	100%	274	100%	75	100%	75	100%	617	100%	617	100%

**Table 24***Topic 6: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	206	77%	232	85%	70	93%	508	82%
Not Included in Testing	57	21%	37	14%	5	7%	99	16%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%	0	0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 25***Topic 6: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary <i>n</i>	Unit <i>n</i>	High School <i>n</i>	Total <i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	21	20	0	41	4%
3rd-5th	111	124	1	236	23%
6th-8th	194	181	0	375	37%
9th-12th	1	195	69	265	26%
N/A	59	39	5	103	10%
Total	386	559	75	1020	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

**Topic 7: The History of Slavery in the Americas**

Tables 26 through 29 show the results for Topic 7, “The History of Slavery in the Americas.” Results indicate that across district types, 598 (97%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the history of the slavery in the Americas in their curriculum (see Table 26). Fifty percent of elementary districts and 46% of unit districts start teaching on the History of Slavery in the Americas in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 27). Results indicate that 90% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (85%) and high school (99%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 82% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 28). Finally, 36% of student from participating districts are tested on this topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 29).

**Table 26***Topic 7: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	257	96%	266	97%	75	100%	598	97%
Not Included in Curriculum	6	2%	3	1%		0%	9	1%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%		0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 27**

*Topic 7: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	60	22%	2	1%	74	27%	0	0%					134	22%	2	0%
3rd-5th	136	50%	3	1%	126	46%	3	1%		0%			262	42%	6	1%
6th-8th	66	24%	246	90%	56	20%	9	3%		0%			122	20%	255	41%
9th-12th	0	0%	0	0%	10	4%	232	85%	74	99%	71	95%	84	14%	303	49%
N/A	2	1%	13	5%	5	2%	27	10%	1	1%	4	5%	8	1%	44	7%
Missing	4	1%	4	1%	3	1%	3	1%		0%		0%	7	1%	7	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 28***Topic 7: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary		Unit		High School		Total	
	<i>(n = 268)</i>		<i>(n = 274)</i>		<i>(n = 75)</i>		<i>(n = 617)</i>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	209	78%	230	84%	70	93%	509	82%
Not Included in Testing	54	20%	39	14%	5	7%	98	16%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%	0	0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 29***Topic 7: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	High			Total	%
	Elementary	Unit	School		
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	25	22	0	47	5%
3rd-5th	114	131	1	246	24%
6th-8th	195	180	0	375	36%
9th-12th	1	188	69	258	25%
N/A	56	43	5	104	10%
Total	391	564	75	1030	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

***Topic 8: Vestiges of Slavery***

Tables 30 through 33 show the results for Topic 8, “Vestiges of Slavery.” Results indicate that across district types, 581 (94%) of the districts that participated in the survey include material on the vestiges of slavery in the Americas in their curriculum (see Table 30). Thirty-nine percent of elementary districts and 42% of unit districts start teaching on Topic 8 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 31). Results indicate that 87% of elementary districts stop teaching this topic in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. The majority of unit (84%) and high school (96%) districts stop teaching this material in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. Regarding testing, 77% of districts that participated in the survey stated that they included material on this topic in their testing (see Table 32). Finally, 36% of students from participating districts are tested on this topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band (see Table 33).

**Table 30***Topic 8: Inclusion of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Curriculum	245	91%	261	95%	75	100%	581	94%
Not Included in Curriculum	18	7%	8	3%		0%	26	4%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%		0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%



**Table 31**

*Topic 8: Grade Bands in which Teaching of Material Starts and Stops by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)				Unit (n = 274)				High School (n = 75)				Total (n = 617)			
	Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop		Start		Stop	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
PK-2nd	46	17%	2	1%	44	16%	0	0%					90	15%	2	0%
3rd-5th	106	39%	2	1%	116	42%	3	1%		0%			222	36%	5	1%
6th-8th	99	36%	238	87%	79	29%	12	4%		0%			178	29%	250	41%
9th-12th	1	0%	0	0%	25	9%	229	84%	72	96%	72	96%	98	16%	301	49%
N/A	13	5%	23	8%	7	3%	27	10%	3	4%	3	4%	23	4%	53	9%
Missing	3	1%	3	1%	3	1%	3	1%		0%		0%	6	1%	6	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 32***Topic 8: Assessment of Material by District Type*

	Elementary ( <i>n</i> = 268)		Unit ( <i>n</i> = 274)		High School ( <i>n</i> = 75)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 617)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Included in Testing	189	71%	220	80%	66	88%	475	77%
Not Included in Testing	74	28%	49	18%	9	12%	132	21%
Missing	5	2%	5	2%	0	0%	10	2%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

**Table 33***Topic 8: Assessment of Material by Grade Band and District Type*

	Elementary	Unit	High School	Total	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
PK-2nd	15	18	0	33	3%
3rd-5th	92	113	1	206	21%
6th-8th	184	166	0	350	36%
9th-12th	1	186	67	254	26%
N/A	72	51	7	130	13%
Total	364	534	75	973	100%

*Note.* Percentages for District Type are not provided because districts could list multiple grade bands, which would result in being counted more than once.

Although the majority of district representatives reported that they include all eight topics in their curriculum and in their testing, it is evident that they are testing at a lower rate (see Table 34). For instance, although 91% of districts include Topic 2, only 65% of those districts include this material in their testing. Topic 4 is the topic least included in both district curricula and testing at 86% and 62%, respectively. Topics 6 and 7 were included the *most* in district curricula (97% for each topic) and district testing (82% for each topic).

**Table 34**

*Summary of the Percentage of Districts that Include the Material in their Curricula and Test Each Topic*

	Topic 1: African Americans in Government	Topic 2: African Americans in the Arts	Topic 3: African Americans in the Humanities	Topic 4: African Americans in the Sciences	Topic 5: Collective Struggle to Achieve Fair & Equal Treatment	Topic 6: History of the African Slave Trade	Topic 7: History of Slavery in the Americas	Topic 8: Vestiges of Slavery in the Americas
Included in Curriculum	94%	91%	94%	86%	94%	97%	97%	94%
Included in Testing	74%	65%	71%	62%	76%	82%	82%	77%

Districts begin teaching, stop teaching, and test for each topic depending on district type. Topics 1 through 5 were first taught in the PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade band in elementary and unit districts, and Topics 6 through 8 were initially taught in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Most elementary districts stated that they stop teaching each topic in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band. Most unit and high school districts stop teaching each topic in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade band. The 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band was the most identified as the grade band where districts include testing for all eight topics.

Table 35 shows the number of districts that are in compliance with Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27-20.4 by district type. Seventy percent of elementary, 82% of unit, and 81% of high school districts meet compliance. Overall, 77% of participating districts meet compliance.

**Table 35**

*Districts Meeting Compliance of School Code by District Type*

	Elementary (n = 268)		Unit (n = 274)		High School (n = 75)		Total (n = 617)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	188	70%	226	82%	61	81%	475	77%
No	80	30%	48	18%	14	19%	142	23%
Total	268	100%	274	100%	75	100%	617	100%

## Open-Ended Items

### *Question 7 – Curriculum as Student Affirmation to Eliminate Discrimination*

On the survey, Question 7 read as follows: “How well do you feel your curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eliminate every form of discrimination in their lives and careers?” Out of the 617 districts that completed the survey, 607 districts provided a rating and a rationale. An overwhelming majority of districts (96.5%) felt that their curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and people to eliminate discrimination in their lives. Based on the responses, 63% of districts responded with a “Somewhat” rating, and many (34%) responded with a “Very Well” rating. A much smaller number of districts (1.5%) responded with “Not at all.” There was a small percentage (1.5%) that did not provide a rating.

Nearly every district that responded with “Somewhat” or “Very Well” provided a rationale that their district is currently addressing these issues by integrating content into a variety of curriculum and social-emotional learning or ensuring that the content is taught in multiple grade levels and across different courses. For example, one district stated the following:

“Our teachers do a great job of explaining the importance of respecting everyone starting at a very young age and continuing throughout their educational careers. Literature classes discuss differences and elaborate on skin color and nationality not being a reason to not include someone. This is addressed in character education and through group discussions teaching students to respect each other despite differences. Discussions on equity and fairness, along with a unit on MLK is taught in social studies. Class materials open the topic, which is expanded upon through in-depth discussions.”

Many districts highlighted the important work of teachers in making sure the curriculum is up to date by using supplemental materials to ensure all cultures and groups are represented in the curriculum. Twenty-one respondents referenced the fact that their districts were either actively engaging in or planning to implement extra training. The types of training and working groups mentioned included equity task forces, professional development, curriculum audits, and implicit bias training.

Another trend seen in the responses was that many schools are actively working to respect and uplift all students. Examples among the 51 responses included everything from character education to social-emotional learning programs that were currently being implemented districtwide. They also referred to teachers doing this work by creating a classroom environment centered on respect and ensuring that their curriculum focuses on respecting all individuals.

Thirty responses across all three ratings stated that the ability to forever eliminate discrimination was out of the scope of the work that a school can do. For example, one district's rationale for a "Somewhat" rating was that "racism and discrimination is sometimes learned in the home from parents, and schools have no control of that. I feel like our school does a good job addressing these issues fairly and responsibly." Many of these responses referred to the idea that racism and discrimination are largely learned at home or in their communities and expressed that their schools are doing the best they can to combat these issues, given the constraints of tackling an issue that is believed to be learned outside the school building.

Specifically, 15 responses in the "Somewhat" category stated that their curriculum was inadequate and dated, and 12 responses felt as though their curriculum did not address the reality of the Black experience in America. In addition, 15 responses further commented on the need for

more resources or noted that balancing the numerous state standards and assessments made focusing on this issue difficult. The last pattern seen in the “Somewhat” category was a lack of consistency within districts and schools of the language, importance, and treatment of this topic; thus, districts felt like they could not answer very well. A few of these districts are already working with outside organizations to provide training for teachers to help with consistency, while others noted that they would appreciate more funding to come with these mandates.

Two patterns emerged within the “Very Well” category. There were 75 responses in which districts stated that they either wanted to shift their focus to explicitly addressing racism and discrimination or they had already made this shift. The second pattern found was that districts had created courses that explicitly focused on these topics, including African American history, urban studies, or sociology courses.

### ***Question 11A – How Districts Include Material in Curriculum and Schools***

On the survey, Question 11A read as follows: “How do you include the information listed in the tables above<sup>5</sup> in your school and district culture and curriculum?” Only 395 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. The majority of respondents stated that the material is included in a variety of courses and through different instructional strategies. The different instructional strategies included primary and secondary sources, videos, class discussions, etc. Social science and English courses were the most common courses that implemented the topics and across various grade levels. Only three districts stated that they offer a course specifically focusing on African American history, and all were at the high school level. One way that many districts are ensuring that topics are addressed is

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<sup>5</sup> “In the tables above” referred to the following: the history of the African slave trade in the Americas and this country, the history of slavery in the Americas and this country, and the vestiges of slavery in the Americas and this country.



through the use of curriculum maps and/or district-level scope and sequences. Roughly 20 responses noted that they had taken the time to either horizontally or vertically align standards and curriculum. Another 14 respondents stated that they used a curriculum audit, either by school or district members, to assess how well the topics were integrated into the curriculum. There were very few mentions of districts incorporating this material into district-level assessments, but many more districts stated that it was assessed in their respective courses.

Some respondents stated that their district had either previously or was currently working with a group that was reviewing Black history in their schools (Equity Task Force, Diversity and Inclusion Committee). Some groups referenced broader diversity and equity working groups that audited district work while others were more specifically geared toward curriculum audits at an individual school. Seven districts discussed the professional development or training that their staff received, including focuses on diversity training, how to respond to current events, inequities in the school system, and anti-bias training.

Sixteen responses stated that most of the work being done occurred during Black History Month; the majority of these districts primarily served the elementary grades. In addition, four responses mentioned hosting community events focused on Black history.

### ***Question 11B – Curricula and Instructional Methods in Use***

On the survey, Question 11B read as follows: “Please describe the curricula used and the instructional methods for each grade level.” Only 367 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. Respondents cited more than 50 different curricula and/or resources that teachers used to guide their instruction. The most frequently cited educational resources were the following: Pearson (24), Discovery Education (19), McGraw Hill (15), Scholastic (15), and TCI-History Alive (15). There was a major emphasis on teachers

designing a holistic curriculum rooted in a variety of educational resources and the importance of this work. Many respondents stated teachers used a mix of pre-made curriculum, supplemental resources, and teacher-created resources to guide their instruction. For example, 13 responses stated they used Newsela to supplement their work. See Appendix D, Table D1 for a full list of the curricula and resources cited in the survey broken down by district type.

The majority of respondents who listed other resources stated the importance of the need to supplement a standard curriculum to meet the needs of their students and current events. For example, one respondent noted the following: “Holt McDougal is the curriculum purchased by the district; however, that is supplemented with more culturally relevant texts, such as Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*, the 1619 project, and other various online resources provided by the district’s social studies curriculum director.” The need to supplement materials with more primary sources and culturally relevant texts was also a pattern for other educational resources, not just textbook publishers. Another respondent noted, “We, unfortunately, supplement a lot of curricula through Newsela and other sources as no text adequately nor appropriately covers the material. We have been looking into the 1619 Project as well.” The overwhelming number of districts that responded to this question (208) identified that they either use a combination of a textbook/curriculum and educational resources or a combination of resources. There were still 48 respondents that stated that their primary educational resource was a textbook or curriculum; most of these districts were either high school districts or the response signaled that the high school in their district primarily used a textbook.

Respondents wrote about many different instructional methods that are used to teach African American history. The most common instructional strategies cited were inquiry-based

instruction (21), class discussions (20), the use of primary sources (16), and textbooks (16). Other strategies included Socratic circles, document-based questions (DBQ), literature, multi-modal instruction, and lectures or direct instruction. See a full list of the instructional strategies referenced broken down by district type in Appendix D, Table D2.

### ***Final Q1 – Additional Concepts Already Taught in Black History***

On the survey, question Final Q1 read as follows: “What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge are you teaching about Black history?” Only 349 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. There was a wide variety of topics, themes, or content knowledge that districts add to their curriculum regarding Black history. A full list of these topics can be found in Appendix E with the frequency of general topics and more focused topics listed. The most frequently mentioned topic was the need to incorporate issues regarding social justice and the fight for equality. Some of the topics included in this group were the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, and issues regarding systemic racism. Some respondents provided specific units that were added. For example, “One major topic that was not included in the previous curriculum was the Civil Rights Era. This is one unit of study that has been added.” Others stated general ideas that need to be covered: “Additionally, roles of injustice are defined as it relates to Black history. These include identifying bystanders, perpetrators, upstanders, and victims as it relates to Black history.”

Sixty-four respondents stated that either they did not think additions were needed or the question was not applicable. Another 57 respondents mentioned that they added a greater focus on Black leaders and their contributions to our society. This ranged from a focus on civil rights leaders to jazz artists to a focus on Black soldiers. Another 35 respondents further remarked on the necessary addition of current events to supplement the curriculum and make connections

with historical events. Some districts responded generally: “Current events are addressed.” Others provided a more detailed explanation of the types of topics that have been added: “Current events revolving around the continuing battle of racism and prejudice in America.” Lastly, 20 respondents stated that they used Black History Month as an opportunity to supplement their curriculum.

### ***Final Q2 – Additional Concepts to be Added to Black History***

On the survey, question Final Q2 read as follows: “What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge should be taught about Black history?” Only 336 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. Fifty-two respondents stated that no additions were needed or that the question was not applicable to them. However, districts that indicated an interest in additions to their Black history curricula provided a variety of responses. Concepts surrounding social justice and the fight for equality were the most frequently cited additions, with 78 references to the topic. Similar to district responses to the survey question about what concepts are currently being added, responses varied in what districts meant by social justice and the fight for equality. For example, one district stated that, “we are continuously adjusting our curriculum to provide for a meaningful exploration of the current Black Lives Matter movement along with other such themes as race in society, race and economic prosperity, and the impact of race in our daily lives.” Whereas, another district focused on equity more broadly: “Additionally, the idea of intersectionality can be taught such as Black Latinx populations, Black LGBTQ+ populations, Black immigrant populations, etc.”

Forty-seven respondents also stated that they think a greater emphasis on Black leaders and their societal contributions are important to add. In addition, 37 respondents proposed a greater emphasis on current events and the need to address events from the last year, such as the

police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the increased awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement. A small number of districts stated that they would like more guidance and resources from ISBE pertaining to this work. Fourteen responses included a move from primarily focusing on Black History Month to incorporating the history of Black people in a variety of courses and contents. Another 14 respondents further commented on the need to focus on lived and regional experiences of the African diaspora in modern day America, and 11 more respondents referenced the need for a more in-depth and representative unit on slavery. A full list of these topics can be found in Appendix F with the frequency of general topics and more focused topics listed.

### ***Final Q3 – Educational Resources Currently Used to Implement Social Studies Curriculum***

On the survey, question Final Q3 read as follows: “What educational resources, which may include, but not be limited to, textbook publishers and titles, are you using to implement the social studies curriculum in your district?” Only 256 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. Many of the districts felt like they had already responded to this question in Question 11B, so they either referenced that response or listed the same materials. Again, there was a major focus on teachers utilizing a pre-made curriculum, textbooks, primary sources, and other educational resources to create a curriculum that was developmentally appropriate and addressed the needs of their individual students. Thirteen responses discussed using literature and 20 responses included the use of primary sources to supplement their curriculum. The following is an example of a district describing this process:

We have “standard issue” textbooks with myriad digital resources, but we use a lot of self-curated primary sources and secondary sources for students to understand history through those who experienced it. We use a lot of document-based questions, some

coming from the DBQ project resource, others crafted by students or teachers. We use a lot of music, art, and other culture revealing resources to try and paint a full picture for students and help them ask questions and develop curiosity about American history and the experience of those who have lived here over time.

A smaller number of districts stated that they followed the textbook curriculum strictly. The most popular sources cited were the following: McGraw Hill (41), Pearson (32), Glencoe (29), Newsela (29), and Scholastic (29). See Appendix G for a full list of the educational resources cited in this response.

### ***Patterns from the “Additional Comments” Section of the Survey***

Only 179 of the 617 districts that completed the survey offered a response to this question. There were a variety of responses in this section. Fifteen districts responded with the need for more support, including professional development, educational resources and curricula, and guidance from ISBE, to fully implement these standards. In addition, many responses stated that they would like to see more free resources or funding to provide these resources to schools. There were nine respondents that stated that the social studies curriculum should focus on respecting everyone in America and not focusing on specific racial groups of people. Other responses included general thanks to the Black History Curriculum Task Force for completing this work or noting technical issues with the survey.

### **Current Positions on Teaching Black History, Protocols, and Penalties from ISBE**

In addition to the survey of all Illinois public K-12 schools, the Black History Curriculum Task Force was also asked to identify ISBE's current position on teaching Black history, its current protocols, and the penalty if its instructions are not being followed. ISBE has not previously published an official position on teaching Black history apart from supporting school districts' and the agency's own compliance with statutory mandates. The agency's [2020-2023 Strategic Plan](#) (ISBE, 2020), which ISBE adopted on Nov. 19, 2020, contains the following equity statement, which encompasses support for the teaching of Black history:

Illinois has an urgent and collective responsibility to achieve educational equity by ensuring that all policies, programs, and practices affirm the strengths that each and every child brings within their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and by delivering the comprehensive supports, programs, and educational opportunities they need to succeed.

(p. 7)

ISBE also provided this statement:

Black history is integral to understanding our nation's past, present, and future; no history of this country is complete without it. All students deserve an inclusive, contextualized, empowering, and transformative Black history education. Students who participate in ethnic studies become better students, with better attendance, higher GPAs, higher test scores, more earned credits, and greater civic engagement (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cammarota and Romero, 2009; Dee & Penner, 2016; Kana'iaupuni et al., 2010). Effective Black history education connects to events today and progresses beyond learning about Black Americans to learning from Black

Americans. Achieving this vision of Black history education for all students in all schools will lead to stronger and more just communities across Illinois.

Additionally, the current protocols to ensure implementation and penalties if policies are not followed are:

ISBE includes the statutory Black history requirements in the instrument used by Regional Offices of Education to conduct compliance audits (IARSS, n.d.). ISBE and the ROEs offer technical assistance and supports to school districts to support compliance, and ISBE may take recognition action against school districts for significant or persistent compliance issues (105 ILCS 5/2-3.25, 2015).



### Recommendations

The Black History Curriculum Task Force agreed to respond to the following questions:

1. *Is the current legislation regarding Black history education in Illinois sufficient? If not, how should it be amended?*

*Beth Crider, with the Peoria Regional Office of Education, provided the following response:*

No. The requirement for U.S. history at the high school level needs to be changed so that the teaching of Black history is included within this required course.

*Bryen Johnson, with the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), provided the following response:*

The General Assembly is taking steps to uplift Black history. The recent passage of HB 2170/PA 101-654 mandating units of study on the events of Black history is a step forward. The IFT believes that providing specifics regarding what should be covered in classrooms via future legislation will provide clearer guidance to educators on what schools should be covering. For example, a resource document that outlines how African and African American history can be weaved throughout the curricula year-round for all grades. There needs to be vertical and horizontal alignment so that students' knowledge of Black history builds from year to year.

In general, we support and encourage any legislative action that will strengthen Black history in Illinois schools. More importantly, there must be some type of enforcement mechanism to ensure that districts are adhering to the mandate that does not include adding another standardized test. Rather, we recommend the state create the conditions for teachers to be able to focus on culturally responsive, project-based learning and assessment that allows students to demonstrate deep, critical thinking skills and utilize academic literacies to expand their critical

consciousness related to understanding Black history. An example of this type of project-based learning can be found in the American Federation of Teachers' capstone project at <https://sharemylesson.com/aft>. These capstone projects were developed by teachers across the country, and we believe this model is the framework under which Illinois should approach students' demonstration of their learning.

2. *What should ISBE's role be regarding any further curriculum requirements pertaining to Black history education in the State of Illinois?*

*Ms. Crider provided the following response:*

ISBE could advocate for the change in the U.S. history requirement for all high school students. ISBE could then convene a working curriculum/social studies group to adjust requirements and align topics to standards.

*Mr. Johnson provided the following response:*

ISBE should lead continued conversations on curriculum requirements and do an in-depth review of the resources that were offered as additional resources from the survey. IFT thought there were good resources suggested by districts that took the survey. ISBE should also act as a repository for Black history resources so that when districts need them, they are readily available and accessible.

An additional component to the successful teaching, understanding, and steeping of Black history into students will be the Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Standards. Recognizing the Part 24 rules apply these standards to teacher preparation programs, the IFT also believes it is important not to separate teaching standards from curriculum to the detriment of

student learning. Teachers need to be prepared to teach this curriculum. Understanding and applying these standards are part of that process. Additionally, high-quality professional learning should be provided to teachers to support the curricular changes required to weave African and African American history throughout PreK-12.

ISBE also plays a key role in recognizing that what it holds schools accountable for becomes what is seen as valuable teaching and learning. Because performance on standardized tests determines the “success” of schools, teachers, and students, curricula has been limited and restricted to cover only information that is “tested.” We need to move away from this myopic perspective. If we value and prioritize culturally relevant curricula, our assessments must also be culturally relevant and responsive — standardized tests are not. Students must be able to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and proficiency in multiple, non-traditional, and non-standardized ways. Otherwise, the teaching of African and African American history will be viewed as an add-on, another unfunded mandate, a zero-sum game where something has to be taught at the expense of something else. This would be a grave error. Ensuring all students understand, question, critique, and interrogate historical studies is vital to the educational experience. We must prioritize and support this kind of teaching and learning.

3. *What additional information do you think needs to be collected regarding Black history education in the State of Illinois?*

*Ms. Crider, provided the following response:*

At this point, I am most curious about the need for integrating Black history and the Black experience throughout PreK-12 curriculum vs. having a separate mandated course. My questions for a separate course become:

- Who is qualified to teach it?
- What core content will be used?
- Is this in addition to the current social studies requirements?
- Does the research support a separate course to accelerate the needed change or is integration the best approach (with current mandated courses)?

*Mr. Johnson provided the following response:*

1) Do districts only teach Black history in the month of February or all year since Black history is American history?

2) What enforcement mechanisms are districts using to ensure that mandates will be met?

3) How can educators build on students' knowledge and understanding and provide multi-modal opportunities for them to apply their learning to real world phenomena?

4. *What outcomes does the Task Force hope to see as a result of the implementation of the Black history curriculum? How will we know it is having the desired impact?*

*Ms. Crider provided the following response:*

I am hoping that the way we teach all subjects is impacted by this Task Force. First, I hope to see the way we teach U.S. history is forever changed to incorporate all who make up our country and not just one point of view. Second, I hope English language arts curriculum is impacted. How we define a book as "classic" is outdated and not relevant. Our young readers need to be engaging with a variety of authors. Most importantly, the biggest impact I hope we see is on social/emotional learning and growth. There are surveys that can be done with students to measure this impact.

*Mr. Johnson provided the following response:*

That educators see Black history as a regular and necessary part of the Pre-K through 12 curriculum across all disciplines. Additionally, that students have a more holistic and comprehensive knowledge of history and chronology.

5. *Given the following considerations:*

1. *Open-ended survey results reference a wide variety of ways in which districts and schools are implementing Black history curriculum and a lack of consistency in this implementation;*
2. *HB 0726, which would require Black history education as a requirement for the completion of 8th grade and high school graduation, and SB 3828, which would require ISBE to submit a report that includes quantifiable data in how schools are teaching diversity and social sciences subject matter and make this information publicly available for review, are both currently listed as “Session Sine Dine”;*
3. *HB 2170 Sec. 27-20.4. Black history study, currently listed as sent to the Governor, would require every elementary school and high school to have in its curriculum a unit of study on the events of Black history but only specifies one unit per school type and does not include the depth to which this material should be covered;*

*it is the recommendation of this Task Force that the legislative language on Black history education in the State of Illinois should include the following:*

*Ms. Crider, provided the following response:*

Black history should not be relegated to one or an isolated unit of study. It should be fully incorporated into every segment of U. S. history. The analysis and integration required by the current social studies standards will become the vehicle for looking at historical events with a critical lens. The teacher will become the facilitator and guide as students explore multiple viewpoints.

*Mr. Johnson provided the following response:*

- 1) Clearer guidance on what exactly should be included in curriculum mandate.
- 2) Some type of enforcement mechanism that does not include adding another standardized test to ensure districts are adhering to the mandate.
- 3) The formation of a committee of IFT and Illinois Education Association practitioners from every grade level to formulate performance assessment ideas.

## **Conclusion**

*"A reduction of injustice is not justice. We must work as abolitionists did to eradicate all injustice and oppression." (Reid, 2020, p. 2)*

This Task Force posits that a curriculum cannot teach *all* if it is neither by all nor for all. To continue to teach history as it has always been taught is to never confront the stark truth that the glories of “liberty and justice for all” have not historically been meant for all. When the voices, experiences, and accomplishments of the historically marginalized and institutionally disadvantaged are absent from history, the cycle of social and structural injustice continues. This

injustice must be remedied by the meaningful inclusion and integration of the histories of diverse peoples into mainstream education.

Therefore, it is the position of the Illinois Black History Curriculum Task Force that it is the duty of the legislative body of the State of Illinois to explicitly prioritize, mandate, and facilitate the thorough education of students by providing diverse content that shows all facets of American history and culture, so that no questions remain about the importance of this work, its power in the fight toward a more just and equitable system, or its role in ensuring that the people of this nation do not continue to repeat its worst history.

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## Appendix A

### Black History Curriculum Task Force

HR 1098 established the [Black History Curriculum Task Force](#), which conducted a one-time audit of the K-12 curriculum of every Illinois public school district. Mainly, the Task Force assessed the extent to which districts in Illinois included the following required topics of study in their curriculum:

Topic 1: Black History in Government

Topic 2: Black History in the Arts

Topic 3: Black History in the Humanities

Topic 4: Black History in the Sciences

Topic 5: The Struggle to Achieve Fair Treatment

Topic 6: The History of the African Slave Trade

Topic 7: The History of Slavery in the Americas

Topic 8: Vestiges of Slavery

At the time of this report, the Black History Curriculum Task Force has met seven times between September 2019 and March 2021 via video conference on the following dates:

September 25, 2019

January 29, 2021

February 7, 2020

March 4, 2021

July 7, 2020

March 31, 2021

August 7, 2020

The Task Force is composed of the following 14 members:

Dr. Marcus Belin  
*Huntley Community School District #158*

Toni Minter  
*Chicago Public Schools*

Dr. Marcus Campbell  
*Evanston Township HSD #202*

Karen Butler-Moore  
*Harvey Public Schools District #152*

Beth Crider  
*Peoria Regional Office of Education*

Myra Patterson  
*Community Consolidated Schools District #168*

Dr. Brenda M. Dixon\*  
*Illinois State Board of Education*

Jessica Ramos  
*Advance Illinois*

Dr. Alicia Geddis  
*Danville CCSD #118*

Khoran Readus  
*Sojourn Shelter & Services Inc.*

Carla Joiner-Herrod  
*Lindop SD #92 Board of Education*

Dr. Maurice Swinney  
*Chicago Public Schools*

Bryen Johnson  
*Illinois Federation of Teachers*

Nita White  
*Valley View School District 365U*

*\*Chairperson*

The Illinois State Board of Education facilitated the research and analyses of the data for the Task Force. Support for the Task Force was provided by ISBE staff. All meeting materials can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/blackhistorycurriculum>.

## Appendix B

### Statewide Black History Curriculum Survey<sup>6</sup>

1. District Information
  - a. District Name (**District**)
  - b. District RCDTS (**Title**)
  - c. Contact Information
    - i. Name (**ContactName**)
    - ii. Title (**ContactTitle**)
    - iii. Email Address (**ContactEmail**)
  - d. Does your school district meet these requirements through an online program or course? (**Q1b**)
2. Topic 1: Contributions made by individual Black and African-Americans in **government** to the economic, cultural, and political development of the US and Africa.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? (**Q2a**)
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? (**Q2b**)
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? (**Q2c**)
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q2d**)
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q2e**)
3. Topic 2: Contributions made by individual Black and African-Americans in the **arts** to the economic, cultural, and political development of the US and Africa.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? (**Q3a**)
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? (**Q3b**)
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? (**Q3c**)
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q3d**)
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q3e**)
4. Topic 3: Contributions made by individual Black and African-Americans in the **humanities** to the economic, cultural, and political development of the US and Africa.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? (**Q4a**)
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? (**Q4b**)
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? (**Q4c**)
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q4d**)
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q4e**)
5. Topic 4: Contributions made by individual Black and African-Americans in the **sciences** to the economic, cultural, and political development of the US and Africa.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? (**Q5a**)
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? (**Q5b**)
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? (**Q5c**)
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? (**Q5d**)

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<sup>6</sup> N.B.: The items in this survey are not presented in this report as they were organized in the live survey. All closed-ended items are reported together, excluding Topic 6. Topic 6 is included and examined within the section that addresses open-ended questions.

- e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q5e)**
6. Topic 5: Include the socio-economic struggle which Black and African-Americans experienced collectively in striving to achieve fair and equal treatment under the laws of this nation.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? **(Q6a)**
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? **(Q6b)**
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? **(Q6c)**
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q6d)**
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q6e)**
7. Topic 6: How well do you feel your curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eliminate every form of discrimination in their lives and careers?
  - a. How well do you feel your curriculum constitutes an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eliminate every form of discrimination in their lives and careers? **(Q7New)**
  - b. Please explain the reason for your rating. **(Q7NewDesc)**
8. Topic 7: History of the African slave trade in America and this Country.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? **(Q8a)**
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? **(Q8b)**
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? **(Q8c)**
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q8d)**
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q8e)**
9. Topic 8: History of slavery in America and this Country.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? **(Q9a)**
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? **(Q9b)**
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? **(Q9c)**
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q9d)**
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q9e)**
10. Topic 9: The Vestiges of slavery in America and this Country.
  - a. Does the districts curricular material no matter the format include current information on this topic? **(Q10a)**
  - b. At what grade school level does he district begin teaching information on this topic? **(Q10b)**
  - c. At what grade level does the district stop teaching information on this topic? **(Q10c)**
  - d. Does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q10d)**
  - e. At what grade levels does the districts testing include material on this topic? **(Q10e)**
11. Optional Information
  - a. How do you include the information listed in the tables above in your school and district culture and curriculum? **(Q11a)**
  - b. Please describe the curricula used and the instructional methods for each grade level. You are welcome to submit samples of your instructional materials to [blackhistorycurriculum@isbe.net](mailto:blackhistorycurriculum@isbe.net). **(Q11b)**
  - c. What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge are you teaching about Black History? **(FinalQ1)**
  - d. What additional topics, themes, or content knowledge should be taught about Black History? **(FinalQ2)**
  - e. What educational resources, which may include, but not be limited to, textbook publishers and titles are you using to implement the Social Studies curriculum in your district? **(FinalQ3)**
  - f. Additional comments: **(Q11c)**

## Appendix C

### Writing Prompts for the Black History Task Force

Task Force recommendations moving forward:

1. Is the current legislation regarding Black history education in Illinois sufficient? If not, how should it be amended?
2. What should ISBE's role be regarding any further curriculum requirements regarding Black history education in the State of Illinois?
3. What additional information do you think needs to be collected regarding Black history education in the State of Illinois?
4. What outcomes does the Task Force hope to see as a result of the implementation of the Black history curriculum? How will we know it is having the desired impact?
5. Given the following considerations:
  1. Open-ended survey results reference a wide variety of ways in which districts and schools are implementing Black history curriculum and a lack of consistency in this implementation;
  2. HB 0726, which would require Black history education as a requirement for the completion of 8th grade and high school graduation, and SB 3828, which would require ISBE to submit a report that includes quantifiable data in how schools are teaching diversity and social sciences subject matter and make this information publicly available for review, are both currently listed as "Session Sine Dine";
  3. HB 2170 Sec. 27-20.4. Black history study, currently listed as sent to the Governor, would require every elementary school and high school to have in its curriculum a unit of study on the events of Black history but only specifies one unit per school type and does not include the depth to which this material should be covered;

it is the recommendation of this Task Force that the legislative language on Black history education in the State of Illinois should include the following:

## Appendix D

### Curricula and Instructional Strategies Used for Each grade level

**Table D1**

*Educational Curricula and Resources Cited in Open-Response Questions in Alphabetical Order  
with Frequencies*

<b>Educational Resource</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
1619 Project		2	1	3
American Yawp			1	1
Amplify		1	2	3
Benchmark Universe		3	1	4
Beyond Textbooks			1	1
BrainPOP		2	2	4
C3 Framework National Council for Social Studies	1	3		4
Caring School Communities SEL		1	1	2
DBQ Project	5	7		12
Discovery Education		14	5	19
Engage NY		1	1	2
Facing History and Ourselves		2	4	6
Fountas and Pinnell Classroom		1	1	2
Gale Research Cite			1	1
Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History		1		1
Glencoe		1	4	5
HMH US History Social Studies	1	10	2	13
Houghton-Mifflin-Harcourt		8	5	13
I Civics		2	1	3
Illinois History Teacher publication	1			1
Khan Academy/Crash Course			1	1
Library of Congress			3	3
McDougal-Littell		3	4	7
McGraw Hill		8	7	15
Me and My World		1		1
MHE American History		1		1
National Equity Project			1	1
National Geographic		1		1
Newsela		9	4	13
Pearson		15	9	24
Prentice-Hall			3	3
Reading A to Z		1		1
Savvas		5	1	6

<b>Educational Resource <i>Continued</i></b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Scholastic		9	6	15
Scott Foresman		2	1	3
Second Step Program		2		2
SHEG Stanford American History Group		3	2	5
Social Studies Weekly Magazine		6	3	9
Southern Poverty Law Center			1	1
TCI (History Alive)		13	2	15
Teachers Pay Teachers		2	1	3
Teaching Tolerance	1	7	4	12
ThinkCERCA			1	1
Wonders Curriculum K-5			2	2
Zaretta Hammond for Culturally Responsive Instruction	1	1		2



**Table D2***Instructional Strategies Cited in Open-Response Questions in Alphabetical Order**with Frequencies*

<b>Instructional Methods</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Artifact Studies		1		1
Collaborative Tech Research	2	2		4
Community conversation			1	1
Current Events		6		6
DBQ	5	7	1	13
Discussions/Debates	4	12	5	21
Inquiry Based	2	12	6	20
Jigsaws	1			1
Lectures/Direct Instruction	3	3	5	11
Literature		8	5	13
Multi-modal Instruction	4	2	7	13
National History Day			1	1
PBL/Game Based Learning	1	5	4	10
Primary Sources/Historical Artifacts	5	6	5	16
Simulations	1	1	1	3
Socratic Circles	2	4	1	7
Teacher created curriculum	3	1		4
Textbooks	2	7	7	16
Virtual Field Trips		1	3	4

## Appendix E

### Additional Topics, Themes, or Content Knowledge Already Being Taught about Black

#### History

##### General Comments

- Not applicable or no additions needed (64)
- Including a focus on current events (35)
- Focus on Black History Month (20)
- Should focus on respecting all people in America (7)
- Topics come up naturally and teacher address them as needed (7)

##### Specific trends and topics

- Social justice and the fight for equality (75)
  - Civil Rights Movement and voting rights (33)
  - BLM movement (12)
  - Systemic racism and discrimination in America (12)
  - Anti-racism (2)
  - White supremacy (2)
- Black leaders and societal contributions (72)
  - Women and Black history (5)
  - Multicultural authors and artists (3)
  - Jazz (3)
  - Contributions to the military (4)
- Jim Crow and segregation (19)
  - Redlining (5)
- In-depth and more representative unity on slavery (19)
  - Underground Railroad (8)
- Focus on lived and regional experiences (18)
  - Sundown towns (2)
  - Impacts on agriculture (1)

- Great Migration (14)
  - Harlem Renaissance (6)
- Reconstruction and the failure of reconstruction (14)
  - Lynching in America (5)
  - Juneteenth (2)
- Greater focus on African history (9)
- Criminal justice system and mass incarceration (6)
- Minority experience in America (5)
- Intersectionality and identity (5)
- Tulsa Massacre (2)

## Appendix F

### Additional Topics, Themes, or Content Knowledge that Should be Taught about Black

#### History

##### General Comments

- Not applicable or no additions needed (52)
- Including a greater emphasis on current events (36)
- Moving away from a primary focus on Black History Month (14)
- Move from a White-centered curriculum (7)
- Should focus on respecting all people in America (6)
- More resources/guidance from ISBE (4)
- Need for an Equity Audit (2)
- Focus on Black History Month (1)

##### Specific Content

- Social Justice and the fight for equality (78)
  - Civil Rights Movement and voting rights (12)
  - BLM movement (16)
  - Police brutality (1)
  - Educational equality (2)
  - Systemic racism and discrimination in America (23)
  - Anti-racism (9)
  - White supremacy (5)
    - Colorism (1)
    - White privilege (1)
  - Bias (2)
- Black leaders and societal contributions (47)
  - Women and Black history (1)
  - Jazz (2)
  - Contributions to the military (7)

- Focus on lived and regional experiences (14)
  - Impacts on agriculture (1)
  - Community conversation (2)
- In-depth and more representative unity on slavery (11)
  - 1619 Project (1)
  - Juneteenth (2)
- Failure of reconstruction (7)
- Greater focus on African History (6)
- Great Migration (6)
  - Harlem Renaissance (3)
- Minority experience in America (6)
  - Oppression in general (2)
  - Connections to other historical events (Holocaust, Chinese Exclusion Act) (1)
- Economics and race (5)
- Intersectionality and identity (5)
- Jim Crow and segregation (4)
  - Redlining (1)
- Criminal justice system and mass incarceration (3)
- Civil War (2)
- Origin of homo sapiens (1)
- Tulsa Massacre (1)

## Appendix G

Table F1

*Current Educational Resources Used to Implement the Social Studies Curriculum*

<b>Educational Resources</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
1619 Project		1		1
American Yawp	1		1	2
Amplify			1	1
Bedford Freeman & Worth	2			2
Benchmark Universe		1	2	3
Beyond Textbooks				0
Black History 365	1			1
BrainPOP		1	2	3
C3 Framework National Council for Social Studies		3	1	4
Caring School Communities SEL		1		1
CNN Kids		3	4	7
DBQ Project	2	6	5	13
Discovery Education		10	10	20
Engage NY			1	1
Facing History and Ourselves	4	3	4	11
Fountas and Pinnel Classroom		1	1	2
Gale Research Cite				0
Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History		1	1	2
Glencoe	2	8	19	29
Great Minds ELA				0
HMH US History Social Studies		10	5	15
Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt	1	14	9	24
Howard Zinn	2	2	1	5
I Civics			2	2
Illinois History Teacher publication		2		2
Khan Academy/Crash Course		1	4	5
Library of Congress	1	1	2	4
McDougal-Little-Holt	4	2	8	14
McGraw Hill	5	15	21	41
Me and My World				0
MHE American History		1		1
National Geographic	1	4	2	7
Newsela		19	10	29
Pearson	3	13	16	32
Prentice-Hall	2	4	6	12
Reading A to Z		3		3
Rebecca Caudill reading program		1		1

<b>Educational Resources <i>Continued</i></b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Savvas		4	2	6
Scholastic		14	15	29
Scott Foresman		5	2	7
Second Step Program		1		1
SHEG Stanford American History Group	3	2	8	13
Social Studies Weekly Magazine		5	1	6
Southern Poverty Law Center			2	2
TCI (History Alive)		16	10	26
Teachers Pay Teachers		3	4	7
Teaching Tolerance	3	8	5	16
The Blue Constitution Book			1	1
Wonders Curriculum K-5		4	3	7
Zaretta Hammond for Culturally Responsive Instruction			1	1