

Teaching Hard History is a “data driven report that highlights that schools are not adequately teaching the history of American slavery, educators are not sufficiently prepared to teach it, textbooks do not have enough material about it, and – as a result- students lack a basic knowledge of the important role it played in shaping the US and the impact it continues to have on race relations in America.” SPLC from the Southern Poverty Law Center:
https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/tt_hard_history_american_slavery.pdf

The publication entitled Teaching Hard History: American Slavery from the Southern Poverty Law Center was reviewed in the Office of Curriculum and Professional Learning. The authors identify 10 key concepts, 7 key problems for teachers and curriculum directors, and makes 4 recommendations for how to improve the teaching of slavery:

- Improve instruction about American slavery and fully integrate it into US History-this would contain concepts every graduating high school senior should know about the history of American slavery.
- Use original historical documents-move beyond the usual narratives to do a better job representing the diverse voices of enslaved persons.
- Make textbooks better-this would include intentional connections-good and bad-to the present
- Strengthen curriculum-districts shy away from difficult topics and conversations

The information in the publication is supportive of our ongoing focus. The WPS uses the MA Curriculum Standards as a framework. The 2018 History and Social Science Frameworks includes core primary source documents and court cases as part of the curriculum. Teachers can also use a variety of supplementary texts, primary source documents, and resources to support instruction, some are suggested on the WPS curriculum platform, but other evidence based resources and sites may be used.

There are many supplemental resources that address how history treats minority groups, as well as women. The department continues to work to update textbooks in line with the state standards. Professional development offerings are ongoing and include teaching strategies to support learning. This includes academic discourse, close reading and text annotation.