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BSU Short Essay Contest

The education system in the United States has been functioning on the same platform of curriculum for decades, and there has not been any form of change to adjust it in a way that intends to set all students up for success. This cycle has progressed with little to no positive change. The people who have the ability to make improvements still have not addressed the question, "Why are at least the majority of students not becoming successful in the education system?"

Students should have a say in what they are taught in the school curriculum so they have the opportunity to learn about subjects they as a majority feel are important to them, and will affect them. Students want to see apart of themselves in the curriculum they are learning, but also showcases of their culture and a variety of other cultures to spread awareness to avoid ignorance. Speaking from my personal experiences, growing up going to public school I did not know about my history, black history, unless it was the watered down version. Whether it was African- American history or my ethnic history within Africa. That experience shaped my feelings about the subject of history.

I did not come to a turning point with history until I attended a predominately black school in North Portland called Rosa Parks Elementary School, in which we did learn about Black history due to the school name's historical significance. Even then my education was limited. It was not until my freshman year of high school in which I began to educate myself. I came to figure out we were not taught things about our culture and history, but we were taught about a specific other. I knew more about Europeans than myself and where I came from. We spent half a standard textbook learning about Europeans and what they did for the rest of the "undeveloped world"; but only a chapter on African- Americans here in the US and they made it seem like the beginning was slavery. They also included a chapter on how Europeans colonized

Africa and brought over "technological advances". That evoked the belief Europeans were on a higher pedestal than everyone else. The fact that black people created art, literature, mathematics, and discovered many valuable resources were never brought to light. I came to realize the system was set up to make us think a certain way and shape our views.

The curriculum needs to be improved in a way that every student is excited to learn. My personal struggle was with history and how it was limited to mostly a certain group. At the same time there are issues with learning styles. Growing up I came across many students who had difficulty learning in classroom settings, but were great with hands on learning. I also knew those who learned through song, dance, or other types of artistic methods. If these few experiences shape the way students feel about education and they are the ones learning in the system, why isn't their input taken into consideration? It is because as of of right now, the system was designed to set up only some students up for success, and to set the others up to fail out.