

Aniyah Borders

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*Changes in High School Curriculum*

Throughout my elementary and middle school career, I was never taught about the African influence all around the world. Not until recently was I exposed to the influence and creations of Africans, from Europe, to many parts of Asia. Growing up without much knowledge on my people has lead me to explore information on my own. When I began to learn about my people's history my whole view on life began to change for the best, not only was I inspired, but I was motivated to educate other people around me to explore the information that is out there for them, but not taught in their yearly history class.

When I first learned about anything related to my history, I felt sad, disappointed and confused to why anyone could be treated so cruel. As I have gotten older I always realized something was missing. Slavery is a sad reality that every kid in the black community has been expected to learn about, but is that it? Although the fight to end slavery is a part of my history, why is it the most highlighted. Whenever exposed to information in history classes, I've always been taught the sad history of my people, "the struggle". When learning about the history of Europeans we see the amazing and brilliant things they have accomplished. The land they explored, and conquered, to the people they have "imperialized", and many other "accomplishments" you can find by picking up any text book.

When sitting in a history class I believe it is important to teach every student their history. History should not only be about accomplishments in the past in the United States of America. History classes should teach students about themselves, who they are; what makes them special, and the best way to teach students that is by allowing them to be educated on all aspects of their culture. Students should be able to share their information with other classmates, in order to expand diversity and cultural awareness.

Overall, history should be taught in a way that is inviting to all students. Since attending Benson Polytechnic High School, I have learned to be more conscious and aware of the different cultures around me. Everyone has a story, and a different background. The portland public school district should take advantage of the diversity and teach a curriculum that fits the needs of the students who will be learning it.