

Hello, I'm Ebele Azikiwe.

I am so thankful to speak with all of you today, thank you for having me and giving me this platform. This all started over the summer when I wrote a letter to my principal because I was tired. I was tired of the violence and inequality that I saw towards people of my skin color on the news.

After the George Floyd incident, and witnessing my mother sitting me down at the age of 11 with my then 8 and 5 year old brothers explaining the cause of all her sadness. About how she's tired because being black means you need to be more cautious of your surroundings, constantly teaching my brothers a little more. Looking over their shoulder seeing people look threatened by their presence for reasons not their fault. My step dad came home on a Sunday after a run in our neighborhood the day before and told us about how he got stopped by the police because someone called to report him-again in our own neighborhood! I started thinking about what could change-what was missing from the world that needed to be corrected.

The first thing that came to mind is lack of education on black history in schools. Black history over the course of my life is taught for a week and often it's the same year after year after year.

Our schools are educating people on how blacks were taken as slaves and treated as less than human. Almost depicting the notion of why black people are angry. They don't teach the stories of how those same slaves built houses, how some of the fields we walk on they harvested. That's not appreciated. We made such a big mark on America to only be taught on how we were tied down on ships on our journey here.

I come before you today asking and begging that you help make a change in our schools. Black history needs to be taught year round, not just over the month of February.

We are too, American

History. We need black history built into the curriculum daily as set forth by the Amistad commission. We need diversity and unconscious bias training

from elementary schools on up bringing awareness to the fact we are all different and helping to know it's ok. Have

books not just about history from the old, but also history from today-by people who look different. (if asked Dan Gillan)

To be taught it's ok to talk about differences and ask questions. From black wall street, it's real rise and fall, to black lives matter and how we got here today. To John Lewis, the icon the world just lost, but many of my peers do not understand his significance, this history can help shed some light on students. There is so much to share, to help awaken people. Also it's not just black history

that's missing but based on the times we are in, it's a start. Children should understand the full picture of American History, get educated on it so they can teach their children and even help dispel what they learned in their homes. If people were taught early we aren't a threat but simply human it will make a huge difference. I am asking for this to happen early on from elementary school up-making a change in high school alone is too late. Just as you teach us other languages from kindergarten level because that is when knowledge is most soaked in by children black history, diversity, unconscious bias should be taught from that age on also.

We are American History. When I look on this zoom platform and see that I'm not the only who cares because you are all here-It's amazing.