



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**PUBLIC PETITION NO.**

**PE01814**

### Name of petitioner

Tobe Amamize

### Petition title

Compulsory education of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic history in Scottish schools

### Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to embed Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) history into the school curriculum.

### Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have written to MSPs both within and outwith my constituency and have written to education secretary John Swinney MSP and heads of councils.

### Petition background information

Over the years it has been observed that a contentious part of society's history that many are not proud of has been omitted from the curriculum.

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) history must be embedded into our school curriculum either through legislation or having a truthful conversation. With that, teachers will have the necessary legal/legislative backing to teach this part of our history without any fear of repercussions.

I have looked at the race equality framework for Scotland 2016 - 2030, published by the Scottish government, and some things captured my attention:

The section on 'education and lifelong learning', states "everyone has the opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment without disadvantage in relation to racial inequality or racism".

Additionally, in the section 'participation and representation', it states that "minority ethnic participation is valued, effective, fair, and proportionate at all level of political community and public life".

However, a report published in September 2019 by the Centre for Literacy in primary education disclosed that in 2018 the percentage of children's books which feature a BAME character was 7%. A total of 11,011 books were published for children in 2018, of which 743 books were found to have a BAME presence.

More shockingly, it revealed that 42% of children's books published in the UK in 2018

more shockingly, it revealed that 42% of children's books published in the UK in 2016 had animals or inanimate objects as main characters. This explicitly displays that a reader from a BAME background is more likely to encounter a book where an animal is the main character than they are a book that contains even one character that shares their ethnicity or cultural heritage.

Consequently, I believe this advocates the message that a dog is a member of society before a BAME person. When BAME existence has failed even to be acknowledged in children books, this sends the message that you are not a member of today's society; it says we value the life of animals more than we will ever appreciate your life.

So, to say that everyone has the opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment is not only false but further attests to the institutionalised racism present in our society. I am sure when the document asserted the word "everyone", that was not to include BAME students, because the harrowing statistics above could not be the same for a reader from a white background.

I have also taken the time to read the Curriculum of excellence. I have noted that the social studies curriculum does not address the deep-rooted problem of racism, by failing to acknowledge BAME history as part of Scotland's history.

"The first stage - By exploring places, investigating artefacts, and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the way we remember and preserve Scotland's History".

From the above statement, one wonders if that only includes the parts of history, we are proud of? Was there a deliberate endeavour to not study the countless artefacts, museums, statues, and street names that expose Scotland's alliance with the slave trade?

Furthermore, the statement that "The Curriculum for Excellence aims to provide the right context to enable children and young people to develop as informed and responsible global citizens with knowledge of Scotland and its place in the world" seems inaccurate. How can one claim that one aims to provide the right context when they have not addressed the context of how our nation made its wealth? How do you expect young people to be informed and responsible global citizens with knowledge of Scotland and its place in the world?

If the history is an optional subject to learn - even when students do study the history, it is too often a one-sided version that is told. We will never have young people with knowledge of Scotland and its place in the world. If they are not taught about Scotland's real history, instead, we will have young people who are ignorant and ill-educated, living in ignorance about the foundations on which our country is built upon.

The examples above are just a few of the many cases where I believe our current educational system has championed the ingrained systemic racism present in our society today. By failing to provide education on the context of racism, we have fostered an environment of ignorance in which the perfect climate is met for racism to thrive.

Scotland's curriculum is not prescriptive in character. Still, it provides flexibility for educators to ensure that black and minority ethnic history are adequately addressed as critical themes in the education of young people. But, it is disheartening that teachers and educationalist have found this area to be so delicate and volatile to delve into without any legal backing or some protection.

No teacher would want to run into troubled water by teaching what they feel is beneficial to the children but might not be welcomed by the family. There is also the danger of a teacher teaching this subject out of context and painting it with their subjectivity and bias. This goes back to why we need to have a robust conversation and get legislative backing on what and how this area should be covered and taught in our schools.

It is a worthwhile discussion, and to not discuss it nor take it to parliament for consideration is not a viable option. We stand to lose nothing but to gain everything by doing so.

**Unique web address**

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/BAMEHistory>

**Related information for petition**

This video will help to provide some context for my petition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ut5gtrezN4E>

Here is a link to my petition which has gathered thousands of signatures.

<https://www.change.org/p/john-swinney-compulsory-education-of-black-history-in-scottish-schools>

**Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?**

**NO**

**How many signatures have you collected so far?**

0

**Closing date for collecting signatures online**

N/A

**Comments to stimulate online discussion**