

Owen Carroll

8th Social Studies

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### Mr Carroll's Equity Work

My father is John Carroll. He is also Superintendent of Lagunitas and Bolinas Stinson School Districts. At the beginning of our interview he is very relaxed in the comfort of his own home but as he gets deeper into his subject matter his shoulders tighten and his tone becomes stern, not so comfortable any more. Our conversation starts out slow and winds through his experiences as a student experimenting with what he is willing to stand up for. Mr. Carroll grew up in a Catholic household, in a middle class family in the affluent town of Ross. Growing up he was exposed to the social justice way of helping less fortunate people and making the world a better place and this rubbed off quite nicely.

"Activism is the habit and practice of taking action to make change that I think is valuable", Mr. Carroll told me. One of the previous opinions that he has voiced was on the abolition of the death penalty. He has donated money to parties and organizations that oppose it, protest against it and has written letters to officials to oppose it. He has been a member of Amnesty International since 1984 (when he was in college). Amnesty International tries to tackle the most pressing human rights violations such as helping people in unfair trials, abolishing the death penalty, trying to free political prisoners, ending gun violence, and stopping torture. Mr. Carroll has given them a lot of money and has written letters to prisoners to let the world know they are not forgotten. Amnesty International has freed tens of thousands of people that were imprisoned for exercising their human rights. Their research and vigorous campaigning led to

the enactment of the U.S. Tribal Law and Order Act to stop the epidemic of sexual assault of American Indian and Alaskan Native women.

Mr. Carroll's main interest right now is to facilitate racial equity in schools. He is trying to remove practices in public education that maintain the privilege of the the white, upper class people in power. In the Tamalpais School District they have to test to get into advanced math classes and those tests create racially discriminatory outcomes. The outcome is that kids in advanced math classes tend to be more white and the kids in lower math classes tend to be people of color. It's not that the system is designed to be racist but the outcomes reflect racial inequity. Mr. Carroll wants people to ask themselves the question that if kids get lower test scores It's not because they are not capable, it's because they have less opportunity. Mr. Carroll wants to give them more opportunities and remove barriers.

For example, there is a test to get into a class at Drake called Honors Geometry. The test is held at 7 am on a Saturday and is not advertised. The less fortunate people may not have the means to get there. No one tells them about the test. It is only in English. There are few low income, African American, and Hispanic children who get into these classes but the majority of the less fortunate kids have no idea that it is going on. Some of the less fortunate kids see white kids in the class and think the class is for white kids. "There should not be an exclusive class for white kids."

Mr. Carroll says he is a public figure in white culture and he feels he has a unique responsibility to make things more equitable for everyone. What that means is that some people need more and have to take more public resources to get more access.

"You know you're making a difference when you make people pissed. He doesn't have all the answers but he wants to call attention to how the system needs to change to have equitable outcomes.

An example of systemic segregation is that there are very few Latino kids playing on the local recreational and club soccer teams. Segregation is because the teams cost a lot of money. And guess what : The teams are predominantly caucasian. The Hispanic teams in other areas are racially segregated as well, all of the Latino kids just join the same team.

One of the most important things that Mr. Carroll has done is that he has influenced the movement to do away with A-F grading that focuses on compliance rather than understanding of the material. For example if you grade on homework completion some students get a massive leg up over others. Imagine having to work and go do laundry or take care of younger siblings and having to go home to do homework or you could be like me; you could get driven everywhere, eat nice meals, have a nice computer and a dad with a masters degree who has the time to be thoroughly interviewed. Even though I do not identify as fully white, I think I am a product of the culture and I have a massive leg up because of it. I imagine I would complete this better than the person I just described if we were grading A-F and not for actual understanding. A lot of people think that that's not related to race and that's because of systemic discrimination over decades. We're not over it yet. Grading is closely correlated to poverty. In a Florida school 21.5% of the students lived in poverty and 20% of the whole school got below average test scores and 19.5% of the 20% were the kids in poverty.

Mr. Carroll feels like he has made some changes but if they have made things better he does not know. He feels confident that he has taken steps in the right direction. People say "What on earth are we going to do about the racial inequity in schools"? They are so overwhelmed by the situation. He says those kind of people should not be teaching.

After talking with Mr. Carroll deeply about racial equity, I have a better idea of how fortunate I am and how important it is to stand up for what you believe in. I am thankful to have such a good role model but also inspired to find what I am truly passionate about.

(MORE STUFF I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD INCLUDE)

Award ceremonies are racist because they have things like best student and most of the time its a kid who had a ton of advantages and they get a big award and a ton of recognition and you may have a kid in the audience who worked their ass off and didnt have a ride to school and take to make breakfast for their siblings and couldn't play sports and maybe he/she got bs and cs and wasn't recognized and to them that must seem like white persons awards.

One world for white kids and one world for brown kids

The parking spaces high schools auction off are for white people whose parents can afford them and the message that sends to brown kids is that you can go to this school but you can't fully participate and you know whos in charge

You know see why the work is so important

The minute you challenge the privilege that white people are used to they try to stop the work thats why hes always trying to always find the amount to do and you don't want to do so much work you get pushed out of position

Golden gate transit dropped the marin city kids who transferred to redwood off at the freeway and the bus from kent dropped the redwood kids off in the parking lot

People say we didn't create the bus routes to do this its just how they are

Critical race theory equity over equality